

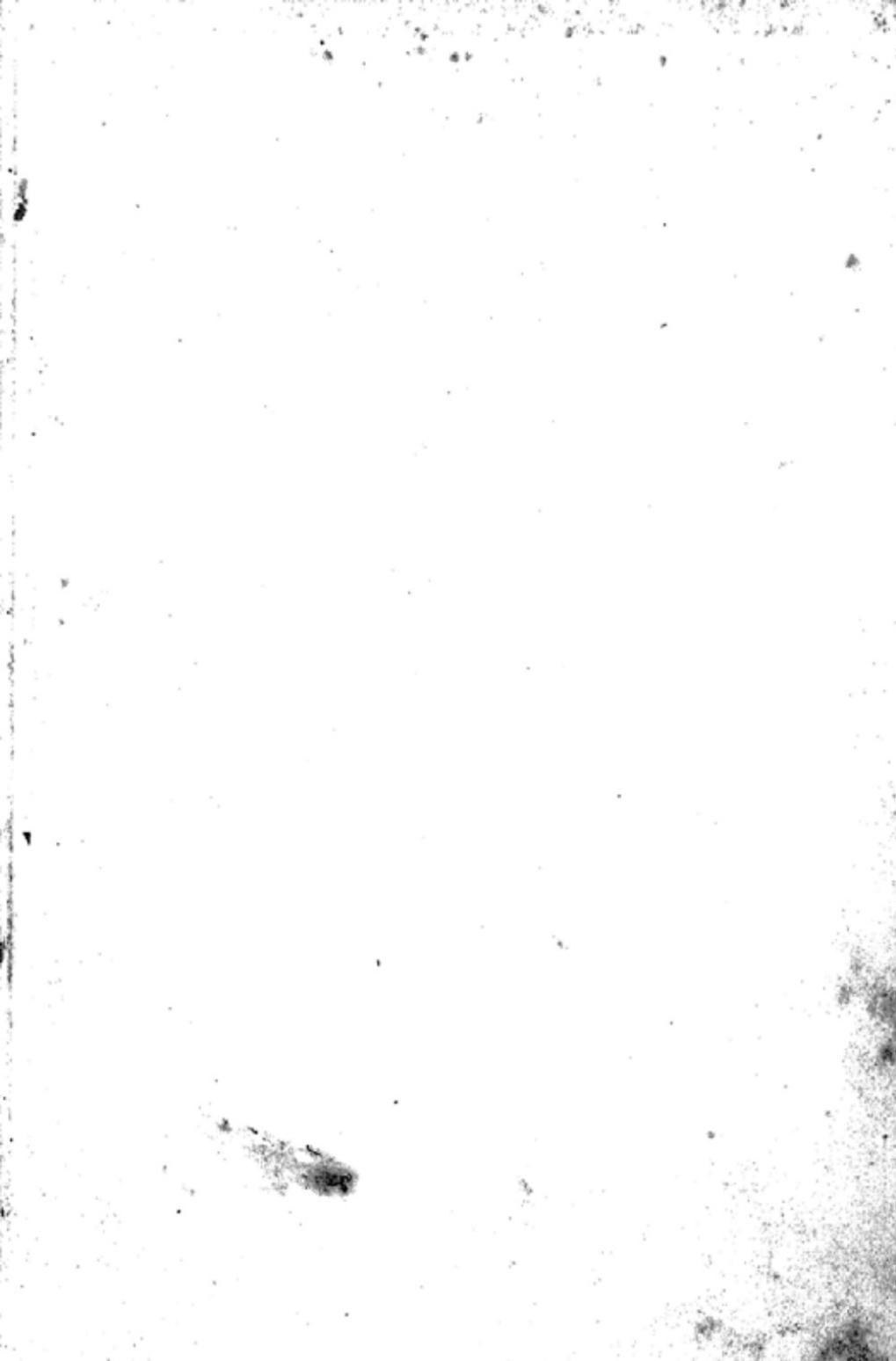
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## A PHILOSOPHY OF LIBRARIANSHIP



# A PHILOSOPHY OF LIBRARIANSHIP

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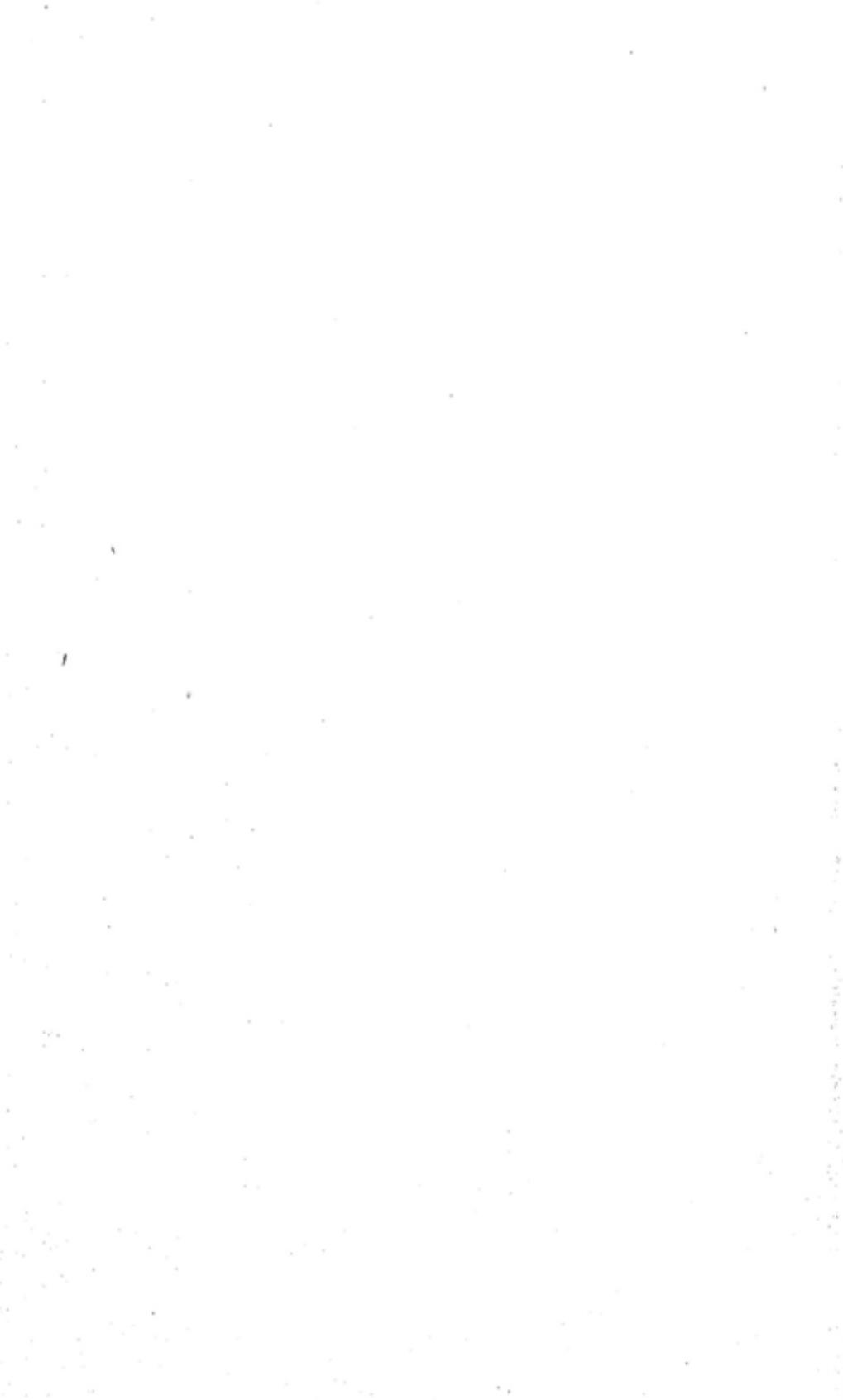
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## PREFACE

THE complaint is frequent that there is no philosophy of librarianship. This book suggests one from the standpoint of the individual.

A broad treatment is given of a few main topics which are intrinsically connected. They are of the kind in which objectivity is difficult and certainty impossible : the field tends to be so monopolised by conviction, and so coloured by temperament, as to result in a philosophy exactly fitted to the character of its author. But the expression of opinion is a good thing in itself, and is even better if reasons can be advanced. It has often been possible to advance them here.

A philosopher who has exerted much influence on librarianship is Auguste Comte, and as this influence seems to have been unfortunate, the reasons deserve to be stated. A discussion of some of his views is included in the last chapter.

October, 1948

A. B.

**To My Wife**

## CHAPTER ONE

### THE REASONABLENESS OF THE DEMAND FOR A PHILOSOPHY OF LIBRARIANSHIP

THE simplest reply to the librarian who asks for a philosophy is that if he were given one he would not understand it. Another reply, more encouraging from one point of view and more discouraging from another, is that philosophers are not clever enough to produce one. A third reply would be that he should find it himself. A fourth would take the form of asking whether he really desired philosophy and not something else. And in all these replies there would be reason.

*The librarian would not understand a philosophy of librarianship.*

The philosophical justification of any activity is a task proper to philosophers. But philosophy since Plato has been a special discipline requiring training in its ways of thinking, and cannot be intelligible to anyone to whom its vital distinctions seem unreal. Today it is becoming more and more remote from ordinary life and is evolving not only its own vocabulary but its own syntax.

*Philosophers cannot produce one.*

The days are gone when a man could expect to get from philosophers a noble picture of the universe, with the particular part of it that interested him most at the centre, and all the rest gyrating around this in ever more deferential circles. Modern philosophers have lost the art, or as they would put it, have freed themselves from the illusion, of seeing things as a whole. According to Wittgenstein the world is not a system but only a set of facts. It is the totality of all that is the case. Nor is there any agreement among philosophers when they consider supposed 'facts'. Many thinkers have amputated the final reference to reality, and believe that in so doing they have cut away confused thinking and futile endeavour; yet the possibility remains that they have cut themselves off from life itself. The situation today is paradoxical, for the layman feels an increasing

need of the world view, while philosophy tries to get away from it ; even science hastens towards metaphysics, while philosophy hastens away from it. Libraries being, or having the opportunity to be, the home of humanism, it would be more in keeping for certain of the philosophers in search of unifying ideas to have recourse to their precincts, than for librarians to appeal to philosophy for guidance.

*The librarian should find a philosophy himself.*

It is true that the invention, or to give it more dignity the discovery, of a philosophy is the province of the philosopher. But philosophy cannot be taken over ready-made from his hands by the librarian who has not contributed to its making. The librarian should himself become philosopher and find his own philosophy. For philosophy is not something delivered to order with a guarantee under the terms of which the purchaser can make irresponsible complaints about the quality of the goods ; nor do the benefits of philosophy suddenly spring into view on the last day of a correspondence course. It is at once the supreme advantage and inconvenience of the subject that it cannot thus be handed over from him who has it to him who has it not. The advantage lies in the reliability of beliefs which the holder has tested for himself, the inconvenience in the unpleasant necessity of thinking. Like wisdom, whose acquisition most philosophers think to be accelerated by the mode of philosophising they favour, philosophical insight is not so much a gift as something that has to be won by a man's own personal effort. Thus it becomes his possession because it has been wrested by him from his own experience. A reasonable answer, therefore, to any request for a philosophy is that the enquirer should work one out for himself. Perhaps the desire for a philosophy not yet supplied, as it ought to have been, by someone else, is in part a projection on to society of the blame which the subject feels towards himself for not having thought out his own position. But a little well-meaning help is sometimes not unwelcome, especially when it takes the form of a pole held out to a drowning man. On such an occasion the recipient does not even require the help to be proffered with diffidence ; nor does the offer need much courage, there being no obligation on the man who has a little philosophy to jump in and flounder with one who has less. It is harder to decide whether the firmest ground he can find on the brink will stand more than his own weight. But he may strengthen himself with the reflection that in the sort of questions we are

approaching it is the general experience that discussion brings to birth knowledge which the participants hardly knew they had. The contact of mind with mind helps to elicit philosophical truth, which anyone can then freely make his own without robbing another. His philosophical property will be particularly secure if it is won as a result of his disagreement. It is hoped that in this light the pages now offered will be regarded.

### *Does the librarian really desire philosophy?*

In expressing his regret that he has no philosophy the librarian is not necessarily lamenting that he is not a philosopher. He might even feel insulted to be so named, for while there are some who desire to be considered philosophers, there are others to whom the term is derisive. Perhaps they would all agree in not requiring a philosophy of librarianship if by the term philosophy were understood such enquiries as concern the evidence for believing in the librarian's own existence, or in that of the members of the public with whom he appears, judging by what his senses tell him, to have relations ; and they would probably agree also in excluding any consideration of the grounds they might have for trusting their memory when they think, as they do, that the encyclopædia states today what they remember to have seen in it yesterday. These are not the kinds of philosophical knowledge which the librarian needs. Nevertheless his use of the word philosophy implies some regard, conscious or otherwise, for the type of thinker who can become engrossed with philosophical problems, even when they are problems of perception, semantics, or the significance of propositions. Perhaps the philosopher wins most regard from the librarian for his interest in questions of ethical or political philosophy, for it is by such a man that the librarian might hope to have his peculiar questions answered in an unsuperficial way, so as to emphasise underlying connections.

Yet there is reason to suppose that many librarians are not fully aware of what they are liable to receive when they ask for a philosophy. Some have perhaps no genuine interest in philosophy, and these will be impressed by nothing so much as by the unreality of what is offered. Such was ever the fate of ideals—to be condemned for being remote from the actual. Others will anticipate a comfortable creed which they will have no difficulty in accepting, and which will free them from the necessity of thinking any more. It would be too disappointing if, in the interest of truth, the philosopher were

bound to tell them that libraries were among the least important of the entities struggling for recognition in the world today. This would indeed be a philosophy of librarianship, but not the one required. They require a statement that shall bear the stamp of authority and yet be abundantly satisfying to them. This effect could be achieved by a writer who would take hold of their most deep-seated but least articulate desires, disengage these from an incoherent complex of yearnings, invest them with dignity by clothing them in rationality, and then present them to their rightful owners as if they were the result of an independent enquiry into objective truth. Such is the procedure that would be most satisfactory to those for whom the term philosophy has become the name of a receptacle for the concentrated wish-fulfilment by means of which they compensate their feelings of malaise. Others again express the need for 'a classic statement of the value of libraries to society.' This is how D. Coney, in reviewing a symposium on librarianship, summarises the observations of those contributors who had remarked on the function of the library in a democracy.<sup>1</sup> The classic is never recognised when it comes, and so those who wish for their philosophy in this form must wait a long time. And by that time the philosophy contained in it will be as good as dead. Fortunately it is impossible for philosophy to descend from heaven in classic shape, since this would imply an uncritical acceptance which would destroy any hope there might have been that true philosophy would come to birth.

G. A. Carter wishes we had a *complete* philosophy.<sup>2</sup> There is a sense in which philosophy is never complete : in this it differs from an edition of a classic. As an enquiry into truth philosophy is unending, and leads in unexpected directions. Not only is this so, but every philosophical question develops a tendency to overflow into remoter regions of the subject. Fundamental enquiries into the principles operating in a limited milieu can seldom be rigidly confined to that area, and no librarian, once he has come to wish to know the reasons for his professional actions, will wish to refrain altogether from exploring the limitless world which those reasons involve or imply. He will require to have some notion both of the principles that ought to guide agents who are not librarians, and also of the real nature of the world as a whole. Ethics and politics cannot be wholly starved of metaphysics. One of the first of the further questions that arise is whether the choice of a philosophy is determined by inclinations, or whether inclinations are determined by the choice of a philosophy.

If the former, we shall have to try to base our definition of choice on environmental, psychological, aesthetic or other such considerations, and need posit no objective truths and falsehoods between which we have no choice but to choose the true, or the most true. Our final product will then more resemble an ideology of librarianship than a philosophy of it. But if the latter, we can consider ourselves bound to choose the philosophy which seems true, even if it is not to our taste. There is little doubt that we must hope that the second alternative is the more valid, and that our beliefs are substantially influenced by reason. This faith in reason may be contested on the ground that it is a personal opinion, and it is; but it is personal not in an idiosyncratic sense, but in the sense that it is, professedly at least, a personal estimate of the cogency of reasons, and is therefore open to be overthrown by stronger reasons. And although it should be admitted that one's accessibility to reason is more a matter of hope than of fact, whereas the propensity to rationalise seems more like a fact, the hope does at least indicate an ideal, and the fact an *evitandum*.

What are we to understand by truth? In one sense it means the total of the kind of true statements that we want to be able to make. We cannot know all of them. In another it means what makes these statements true. Nor do we know for certain what this is. Despite our ignorance, we know that there *are* true and false statements, though we are seldom certain which are which. We believe it is possible that, if we exercise and safeguard the spirit of enquiry, truth may become progressively better known, which implies that falsehood may become better known, although we do not think the two are the same. In fact we are convinced that there is a fundamental difference between truth and falsehood, and that this can and ought to regulate our thought.

We have thus found two reasons for rejecting the requirement that the philosophy of librarianship should in this world be a complete one: first that there is no end to the true statements that it could comprise; second, that the limits of the enquiry cannot be accurately drawn. There is a third reason, dependent on the sense of 'completeness' in which a compendium of answers to all the practical problems that could arise would be a complete compendium. A philosophy of librarianship should not be such a compendium, nor does G. A. Carter say that it should, but only that if we had the complete philosophy we should know the answers to the problems. The philosophy of librarianship does not contain the solutions to the

problems of librarianship ; it is the sort of knowledge that the man has who can solve them. At present no one knows all the problems, much less all the answers.

Nor can a philosophy of librarianship issue recommendations as to how the librarian should deport himself *vis à vis* his public : that he should not be patronising, condescending, familiar, or whatever it may be. His behaviour will simply be the consequence of an underlying attitude to librarianship, society, and life. Whatever attitude he develops through philosophy, he will behave accordingly. The only way to ensure perfection of behaviour is to perfect the motives for behaving. For behaviour is a unity, and cannot be divided up in such a way as to be amenable to rules : thus the most trivial act is evidence of the desires, thoughts and aims that rule the whole life. These a man should regulate and discover for himself. And in librarianship he need not be afraid to do so. The military man, whatever views he may hold as a man, cannot uphold the dignity and independent judgement of the individual, since his aim has to be the inculcation of unreasoning obedience. The politician, much as he may wish it otherwise, has to try to make people not good thinkers but good voters. The solicitor cannot always regard it as an advantage if the individuals he deals with should acquire a knowledge of the truth. The policeman must, as a member of that profession, set aside whatever as a man he thinks of justice in favour of what, as a policeman, he is required to think of law. The parson must look to his self-preservation if he feels inclined to hold a poor opinion of church doctrine, or even of the bishop's interpretation of it. But the librarian, in free lands at least, is in a singularly happy position ; for the philosophy he thinks to be true as a man, that philosophy he can espouse as a professional man. Consequently his vocation can, with reasonable courage, be remarkably free from hypocrisy.

Besterman gives a hint of the relation between library philosophy and library technique when he remarks that 'sound library technique must in the long run be based on an understanding of library purpose'.<sup>3</sup> Philosophy of librarianship should be concerned only indirectly with library practice, otherwise it would merely augment the literature of the techniques. For similar reasons it is advisable to avoid dividing the subject according to the kind of library, and then assigning a different philosophy to each kind. Nor is a philosophy of librarianship best approached through the American Library Association's fivefold division of library function into education, information,

aesthetic appreciation, research and recreation.<sup>4</sup> The philosophical ideal is to interpret the whole of the subject matter in the light of a single principle : if this principle is sound it will give the character of necessity to everything else. The methods of division would allow such a universal principle to slip through the fingers. The intention in avoiding them is to give the treatment in breadth what it loses in applicability to specific situations and institutions. But no philosophy should set out to give a dogmatic account of the one and only principle according to which problems should be faced. It should cause others to find their principles. And it is useful if it only causes the abandonment of principles. But it need not hesitate to indicate some questions whose vital importance must at any rate be granted, and to suggest one principle by which to answer them.

There may be a librarian somewhere who is ready to credit philosophy with some sort of use to librarianship, and who is prepared to philosophise for himself. What can be done for him ? He is a man to be treated with respect. He wishes to have a statement of what the library should aim to do and to be, or, for this has the same meaning, a statement of what the library really is. He considers it supremely worth while to discover whatever is most perfect, irrespective of its remoteness from actuality, but may not agree that the ideals proposed as perfect are so ; hence his approach is likely to be fruitful. Proud to belong to the profession he has chosen, he would like to see it justified before the world. Some part of the glory which it should thus acquire might be reflected on him, and to this he would have no objection. Indeed he would like to show that he deserves that honour by pointing out the clearly defined and logically defensible aim which he, and in an important sense he alone, is pursuing. At the same time he understands that the qualities of necessity and real value which he requires a philosophy of his profession to reveal also oblige him to act in the same way if no glory accrues to him personally, but only to some larger entity for the sake of which he might think he ought to sacrifice himself, or even if in pursuing his chosen aim he is visited with obloquy. For he does not go so far as to desire his professional aim to be justified before the world if the world is foolish. In that case he prefers his own judgment, and is prepared to act on it and abide the consequences. Come what may, he believes it is important that librarianship should be placed in its true perspective among the other activities of men, and that he himself should know where he stands in relation to ultimate goals. If he can also hold

reasoned views about the proximate means of attaining these ends, so much the better. But at least he cannot afford to be in ignorance of his ends, and it is such ignorance as this that he expects a philosophy of librarianship to remove.

What then are ends? L. C. Wroth has written an essay entitled *The Chief End of Book Madness* in which he urges that the great libraries could not have come into existence without the book collector. The latter is commonly regarded with pitying indulgence, as the boy who fails to grow up, and collects books instead of stamps and eggs. But a critical point is reached when his collection emerges from the dusk of private enjoyment to the light of public importance, and a new scholarship has to be constructed round the collection as a nucleus. Thus the end of book collecting is the formation of the scholarly library. But this is its end in a temporal sense, as a knowledge of wines and spirits is the end when a man establishes himself in that trade with the money he receives in compensation for the loss of a leg. It is the end in the sense that it is the last thing that happens. The collector as collector simply collects, and does not promote scholarship. He is driven from behind by the urge to collect, not pulled from in front by an ideal of knowledge. This does not imply that no goal is present to the mind of the collector: on the contrary the goal of completeness is present throughout, and when it is achieved his instinctual drive sinks into a peaceful quiescence. As so often, a crucial case reveals motives: we may take the number one hundred as the goal of completeness, and suppose that the collector has acquired ninety-nine. Suppose further that he is a scholar as well as a collector, and that the acquisition of the hundredth specimen will involve many years of travelling. He must choose whether he will undertake these journeys for the sake of the hundredth or carry out a scholarly investigation of the ninety-nine. As collector, he will immediately pack his bag and set off. Looking at the matter pragmatically, the work of the collector is useful and benefits scholarship. But this is not the kind of significance the philosopher of librarianship wishes to find in his ends. He does not seek the kind of ends that can be pursued in the confidence that in the end his labours will prove useful for something else. He wishes to define the end or purpose of librarianship and to pursue it for its own sake.

Although they are for him, it can hardly be hoped that the pages which follow will satisfy one so exacting. A political or social

philosophy cannot count on satisfying anyone. It is suited to the times, and presented as urgent; and no one need agree about the times. Some might even think that in these times those who have no philosophy to dominate them are lucky, and that the lack of fixed faith is a sign of freedom and maturity.

The prospective supplier of a product of industry surveys the quantity and quality of the demand, and when his product is ready for the market he does not issue it without preparing the minds of the recipients; he wishes them to know what they may expect to get from it and how they may legitimately regard it. Much the same considerations govern the purveyor of a philosophy. But a heavy demand is not for a large quantity. The quality of the demand should be assessed, but that of the supply is a matter on which the philosopher, unlike the industrialist, need not express any judgment.

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## CHAPTER TWO

### THE TASK OF THE LIBRARY IN THE MODERN WORLD

WHAT are the characteristics of the philosophy of any profession ? The majority of professions exist rather by reason of what their members do than by reason of what they think, and the philosophy of these might be thought to be concerned rather with the theory of doing than with that of thinking or meaning, and hardly at all with the theory of being. But librarianship is not entirely such a profession, since it depends for the maintenance of its standards on thinking as well as acting.

Not only is this so, but there is a sense in which it is misleading to call philosophies which try to answer the question 'what should be done ?' *practical* philosophies as Houle does<sup>9</sup> when he states his requirement that a philosophy of librarianship should be a practical philosophy, contrasting it with a philosophy of nature, which seeks to discover what nature *is*. For the answer to the question 'what should be done ?' depends on the answer to the question 'what is good ?' This is a question about what *is*, and the answers to it are as theoretical as the answers to any other philosophical questions. Even ethics rapidly abandons the merely practical aspect of conduct, so as to consider the real nature of the concepts which are implied in supposing conduct good. Houle continues with the three propositions—

- 'A philosophy which is practical (in this sense) achieves valid meaning only in terms of its operation.
- 'A code of ethics has relevance and force only if it is carried out in the lives and actions of people.
- 'Similarly a practical philosophy of librarianship has its fullest meaning when it is evolved by and operates to guide the actions of the individual librarian or the group of librarians who are working together in a single institution.'

As to the first : what does 'valid in terms of operation' mean ? No philosophy will give a valid answer to the question 'what should be done ?' if it advocates what cannot be done. So obvious is this

that it can hardly have been meant. Can the meaning be that the operation of a principle proves its validity—that the answer to the question ‘what should be done?’ cannot be given until what is done is done? As to the second: its *truth* is what gives a code of ethics ‘force’ and makes it ‘relevant’ to the attainment of good in life and action. Does Houle think that a humanitarian or democratic code of ethics only has relevance and force if it is put into effect by a people, and that when a people ignore it, it loses its relevance and force? A true code of ethics is true whether or not anyone practises it. As to the third: how can a philosophy of librarianship only have its ‘*fullest meaning*’ when it is ‘evolved by and operates to guide the actions . . .’ etc.? It means what it means, and cannot mean more fully. And how does it operate to guide action if it is evolved by action? It is or does one or the other, and not both. But perhaps straight answers cannot be had from one who says that ‘In the formulation of objectives . . . it is always necessary to move simultaneously in two directions’.<sup>10</sup> A philosophy of librarianship has certainly practical bearings. They do not excuse us from the task of thinking.

One of the main causes of the misery of man in society is the inability of human beings to do without a government. The problem is to discover how they can be governed and yet free. The organised life of the community is essential to the existence of a state, but it is essential as mechanism only, and not as the end to which all other purposes are instrumental. The province of political philosophy is to suggest and justify means of restraining the organisation and of governing the government. To give effect to these means is a duty which devolves upon everyone who values freedom, but librarians can make a unique contribution by safeguarding freedom of thought, which is not only a vital constituent in liberty but a means of securing and preserving liberty as a whole.

The library exists for the sake of freedom of thought. But no sooner has this principle been enunciated than it runs into complex theoretical and practical difficulties placed in its way by a world whose propensities are authoritarian. There are stiflers of freedom who are supported by well organised supply lines, which keep them provided with both kinds of ammunition—the kind that is deadly to life and the kind that is deadly to thought, so that it becomes necessary for libraries to guard their right to think from intellectual, as well as the institutions themselves from physical

attack. The right of freedom of thought differs from the other freedoms which man claims as rights. He can be prevented from eating, sleeping, meeting or voting, but not from thinking. It would not be in the interest of the tyrant to prevent him from thinking, since the ability to think increases the capacity for suffering. The despotic ideal is twofold : to find out what a man is thinking, and to determine absolutely what he shall think. The first has not yet been achieved. Progress has been made with the second by indirect methods, and it is with these that libraries are concerned—methods which do not prevent thinking, but alter its quality. The adversaries are not only enemies, but those who ought to be friends. Organisation for the defence of free thought is necessary, and a dilemma arises from the inherent problem of reconciling the very existence of organisation with the maintenance of the conditions necessary to the liberty of individual thought.

Today not only liberty of thought is held cheap, but freedom of action also. The necessity of considering the rightness or wrongness of action is taken out of the hands of the person who performs the acts. Either they are done for him, and he becomes a pampered slave, or he is assured that when he does as directed he is acting for the common good. His deeds, being praiseworthy according to the accepted standards, are praised. Such an easy solution of the problems of thought and life appeals widely to those who, if they thought at all about what they did or believed, would consider above all else the opinion others had of them. Those members of society who experience no strong urge to discover ultimate values are content with substitutes so long as all the others acquiesce in them also. To them it seems a vindication of evil conditions that they are universal. The sting is taken out of what they are called upon to suffer if they can be spectators while others suffer the same. Such as these make the best material in the hands of dictating and controlling governments, for those governments have only to give assurances that the slavery they introduce will be universal and in the interests of all, for it to be tolerated. The only proper subject of tolerance is contrary opinion ; towards this men are now intolerant, while they tolerate what they ought not. Here there is a lack of sincerity and of personal integrity that is not likely to be shown by the individual thinker, to whom it matters most of all that spiritual goods, demanding intellectual effort for their appreciation, should be understood by each man according to

his abilities, and as far as possible enjoyed on earth. These abilities require training and good mental food. Many a man who could exercise them will be unable to do so unless librarians place facilities at his disposal.

Once librarians have given careful thought to the provision of facilities, and have made them known without ostentation, a duty then arises in each individual person for whom provision is made freely and spontaneously to avail himself of it without pressure of advertising, publicity, propaganda or direct coercion. 'Public relations' should be avoided inasmuch as they are modelled on state practice, and are therefore dangerous. The duty to read and think is simply one which the individual owes to himself. But today personal ideals are not considered important. Men have forgotten how to be happy in private. It is thought that a man should be ambitious and should desire responsibility, desires which are augmented by public opinion. By ambition is not meant the restless urge to create what is good or beautiful, nor the incessant stimulus to think more and more truly, but the nagging desire to receive higher and higher reward for efficiently compelling others to carry out the dictates of authority. By responsibility is meant something like the 'handling of men,' not the responsibility to help them to be free and happy. The librarian should contrive to help people to live full individual lives by showing them the way without badgering them and thus depriving them of the chance of spontaneity.

But his task is not merely to *satisfy* the requirements of the thinker and the independent student of truth. He has the more fundamental task of helping to *create* such thinkers and students. It is not simply a question of supplying the needs of brilliant minds who suddenly appear from no one knows where, and approach the librarian to make their wants known. If he does no more than to sit back and wait, these requests will never come. On him, and on others to a lesser degree, it depends whether the enquiring mind will come into existence at all. This does not mean that the librarian's duty is to bustle about with arms full of books, looking for promising minds. His first duty is to think for himself. If he carries it out, his own house will be in order. His library will be equipped with the matter for thought which other thinkers require. Students will thus come into existence. For unless nourishment is provided minds cannot come into being, any more than bodies

without the food proper to them. In nearly all parts of the modern world there is a preponderance of men who do not require to be tempted to eat or think : they can get the materials for neither.

Formidable obstacles confront the librarian who would think himself, and create and satisfy thinkers. Among the chief are mass psychology and power psychology. Many men are not real individuals and are incapable of sensing the applicability to themselves of the general principles of individual worth and independence of judgement. They carry to the point where it becomes ridiculous the virtue of reacting slowly to the slights and rebuffs offered them, and suppose that the best way to endure arbitrary authority is to develop a sense of humour, as if what they had to suffer were as inevitable as a natural calamity. They are not likely to stir themselves for the sake of intellectual ideals which they can only vaguely conceive, especially if their present condition gives some cause for satisfaction. Some will never consider their freedom if their pockets suffer. Others desire above all a peaceful or secure life, and if a government seems to offer this they will support it with no thought for remoter consequences. And the world is filled with people who wish to be directed and to direct, and who were never before so indifferent about what will happen to them. If a group within a society makes a determined stand against imposition, the rest of society exerts an irresistible pressure on the group, desiring the enslavement of the group in consequence of its own discontents, which, following the path of least resistance, it regards as irremediable. Anyone who urges that the dignity of the individual and the freedom of his thought are fit matters for consideration is simply making a fuss about nothing ; but he becomes more obnoxious when any of his arguments relate in the remotest manner to his own dignity. This is regarded as a clear proof of 'special pleading'. But if he ventures to exert himself on behalf of someone else who seems to be ignorant or frustrated, his intervention is liable to lead to the ruin of the person he wishes to help, who ekes out a precarious existence by keeping in with the authorities.

There is thus a vast floating population who make an ideal practice ground on which the lovers of power can try out their techniques of leadership and intimidation. Like practice grounds for tanks, these unfortunate people are mauled about until their only hope lies in joining the ranks of the oppressors. Those of them who do so exchange the passive for the active life, and play their part in

some powerful organisation. Not ceasing to be slaves themselves, they nevertheless exercise power over others, and thus correspond exactly to the nation of slaves that seeks to dominate the world. Ordinary human beings regard power as compensation for their own subservience, gaining satisfaction not from the freedom of all, but from the comparative freedom of themselves. These are the men who frequently become members of a central government. Governments desire conflict of whatever kind, since it holds the chance of an increase of power, the desire for which has placed them where they are, with the exception of those who act from disinterested motives. Such as these are the librarian's friends. They constitute no obstacle to the fulfilment of his professional aims, and are good allies. But governments in general seek their own strength, and when they win extra power by victory in conflict they hasten to consolidate it.

There can be no solution of the problems of government until there is respect of man for man, since the individual cannot make himself respected for his power. Nor can he join with others for the mere purpose of acquiring strength without compromising his intellectual independence. The possibility of this respect arising generally is remote, and the difficulty of achieving good government is enhanced by the fact that those who exercise authority are the men with least respect for other men simply as men. They think in terms of superiors and subordinates. It is men such as these who make civilisation difficult to maintain. For they create between men the artificial differences of position and name, which are not tolerable except with subservience, in place of differences of opinion concerning objects of thought, which if sincerely held are tolerable without subservience. But in the contemporary reversal of values, the oppressive conventional differences are tolerated as a matter of course, while differences of opinion are not tolerated. The man who expresses his opinion is regarded as impertinent, or if he escapes that accusation he is, by common consent, a nuisance. To help in the creation of a community of thinking men, holding opinions independently arrived at, is the main task of libraries. Without libraries a community of seekers after knowledge would be impossible. No other community can live at peace.

Whenever the love of power becomes a conspicuous motive in social life, there is a danger that authoritarian government, or a naked form of tyranny, will be set up, and these evils are peculiarly

liable to ensue when an equalitarian philosophy is embraced by supporters of democracy. Such doctrine threatens to make all men equally unfree. In the train of dictatorial control comes the familiar official orthodoxy, which may extend to even the most academic spheres. Thus in the school of Lysenko Marxism has had a throttling effect on genetics,<sup>1</sup> and the resources of governmental machinery are used to propagate the official genetics. Universities do not in any country achieve unqualified success in withstanding the influences of nationalism and the other dogmas sponsored by holders of power, and it is to be feared that libraries, whose importance for the spread of truth is even greater since the activities of libraries are so widespread, will succumb more easily. For they are manned by persons less practised in independence of judgement, and sometimes less capable of it than university staffs, and many members of library staffs are so vaguely aware of what goes on in the world around as to be unable to recognise, as well as powerless to act upon, the signs of things to come. If they do not find the philosophy of the man who is interested in truth alone, and holds to it in practice as well as in theory, they may have to invent a totally different philosophy *ex post facto* in justification of violence. If this were to happen it would be calamitous not only for the librarians themselves as professional men and as individuals, but for all other persons also. It may seem to some librarians that the infringements of liberty and personality that take place have nothing to do with librarians as librarians but only concern them, if at all, as men, or as members of national states. Then the considerations now urged would have nothing to do with librarianship as such. Nothing could be further from the truth, since everything that men do or suffer is ultimately connected with what men think, and the librarian should be their watchdog in this department of life. By taking thought it is possible to prevent injustice and misery.

How does the purely intellectual ideal of truth-seeking become the moral ideal of the respect of man for man, which would make possible an ordered world society, free yet not anarchic? To come nearer home, how does a philosophy of librarianship argue that library service of the finest kind is indispensable for world happiness? The connection lies in the truth-seeker's rational apprehension of the fact that his activity, leading to the opinions he forms, is also valuable when it is carried on by another, and leads to that other's opinions, or when it is pursued by them jointly. Consequently

it is rational for him to desire and to work for the right of every man to do as he himself does. Original creation in art is always, and research in science and elsewhere is often, the work of single minds like his, and when more than one mind is at work they will be found to be independent minds united only by a common devotion to truth. Librarians have it in their power to make possible the activity of such minds.

They have a duty also to those individuals to whom their individuality is excessively painful. Some of these are frequent visitors to public libraries, and most of them are more responsive to kindness than so-called normal people. The maladjusted crave to be like others, so as to escape notice and to be regarded as normal. They thus turn in an unfortunate direction, for the only genuine solution of their problems lies in successful endeavour on their own part to know themselves, and to find their true individuality without fear. There is no greater encouragement to them than the discovery that others have fought and won similar battles, and even created great literature, art or music in the process. Literature will help them to understand that they are no exception to the rule that freedom has always a painful birth, since it involves the individual in conflict with others and in harder battles with himself.

The existence of society is justified by the welfare of the human being, and this consists in or is impossible without freedom. A philosophy of librarianship should affirm that the part of the life of society which is librarianship has for its purpose the maintenance of the part of the life of the individual which is the activity of thinking freely. Even looking at the matter from a no more enlightened point of view than that of a powerful government, man's life and abilities are one of society's assets, needing to be carefully conserved and not wasted in the way in which modern society is fast destroying its resources. To preserve man with this motive would at least prevent him from being thoughtlessly squandered, and would therefore be an advance. But no such philosophy can be the true basis of respect for the individual. For society, acting as it may be supposed through government, has not the right to decide how a man shall be used, and it is better that he should retain the right to waste his own life than that his abilities and activities should pass under the forceful protection of society. The state considers what pays, and must therefore regard men in bulk, as the business world regards consignments

of goods : public time (for even the ownership of time is claimed by the public) cannot be wasted in considering single items.

Books are far the strongest safeguards of freedom of individual thought. The lecture is attended by a group—a miniature society—and although the listener sometimes chooses whether or not he will attend, he cannot choose what he will hear. But in using his personal selection of books, which he keeps open in front of him for consultation together, he chooses the sequence and connection of ideas. The library thus used is more effective than the lecture as digging a garden oneself is more effective than watching a paid man scrape the surface. At the lecture, too, the listener's thought is liable to be influenced by the feelings the lecturer deliberately arouses in him, appealing often to his baser part in virtue of which he is counted as one of the mass, and by those feelings which the lecturer does not deliberately arouse, and by the reactions of those who surround him. In a free society these reactions are, as everyone knows, highly enjoyable. Under conditions of impending tyranny they can be equally sinister.

The power of the book to influence opinions should not be exaggerated. Although not scientific, it is interesting to consult one's own experience and to ask 'Has a man known to me changed his opinions because of a book?' Some persons change their opinions because of a film, or because they become richer or poorer, happier or sadder. A few change them because of a book ; but while the author hopes that their number will be identical with the number of those into whose hands the book falls, they are far fewer. Many choose only books that are not likely to change their opinions, and carefully taste a few sentences before biting. But perhaps this need not depress the librarian, whose ultimate purpose is not to help in the production of the kind of opinion that has little connection with thought. He wishes the individual to acquire for himself knowledge. This does not vary, as opinion does, with the state of the stomach, and with one's own fears, hopes and prospects. But how, anyone may ask, can the acquisition of knowledge be recommended when it is seldom possible to know the truth, but only to hold an opinion regarding the object of search? There is a difference between opinions merely held, and opinions held *as* opinions. It is the latter kind that a book ought to stimulate, since they imply an ideal of striving for truth.

While promoting freedom of enquiry, we should remember

(where this applies) that libraries owe their financial support and its improvement to compulsion exercised by a majority over a minority who may disapprove of the expenditure. Although this form of compulsion is necessary if society as we know it is to exist at all, the compulsion is exercised with no compunction. Thus librarians are at a disadvantage because they are placed in the position of tyrants from the start. Some would argue that to chafe under such compulsion is unreasonable, since others chafe under similar compulsion to contribute for purposes which benefit oneself. But this is rather a psychological than a philosophical justification of taxation. Cumulative coercion does not produce freedom, and it is a matter for regret that a man, because of the perhaps unavoidable crudity of government, must accept at the hands of society supposed benefits which are extorted from others. The forceful provision of library services should remind librarians to avoid all other exercise of power in the intellectual sphere, and to embrace the cardinal principle of honouring opinions with which they disagree. It also imposes on them the duty of trying to show their 'supporters' that what the latter pay for is worth having. A good deal is known about the methods of doing this, because the aim is thereby to secure further appropriations. Not the worst kind of publicity for libraries would present their shortcomings and missed opportunities as well as their intelligent, far-sighted successes. It would thus be apparent to everyone, even to enemies, that the libraries gave not only the truth about other things, but about themselves. At present the annual reports of librarians relate only successes, or deficiencies due to circumstances over which the librarians are represented as having no control. These reports aim at creating a good impression, and thereby become suspect.

A good attack on the public library, though written with some bigotry, is that of M. D. O'Brien; it is not in the Library Association's booklist, which consists of texts regarded as favourable to the library idea. Associations express only the view they favour collectively: it is the evil of the united front. O'Brien wrote in 1891, and is therefore quite modern, as quotation will show. He commences 'A Free Library may be defined as the socialist's continuation school. While state education is manufacturing readers for books, state-supported libraries are providing books for readers. The two functions are logically related. If you may take your education out of your neighbour's earnings, surely you may get

your literature in the same manner. Literary dependency has the same justification as educational dependency ; and no doubt habituation to the one helps to develop a strong desire for the other'.<sup>15</sup> His point is not a bad one. The ideal is for the individual to buy his own books in mint condition at the cost of a little personal sacrifice. This should at least apply to *some* of his books. Thus he is independent of public charity. He treasures his books as his own, has them always at hand for serious work or the satisfaction of a whim, with no tyranny of date stamp. He can enjoy the finest of literature and the best of book production undefaced by official marks and mass produced bindings. But unfortunately it is seldom possible today for anyone to satisfy himself in this way without amassing wealth out of all just proportion, so that theoretical wisdom and beauty go hand in hand with practical injustice. And the largest quantities of books are required by the neediest readers, the men of learning. These men encounter so many bad books today, that they are only too glad to be able to hand them back to a library.

O'Brien notices that the Library Association is 'a body composed of librarians whose bureaucratic instincts naturally impel them to push their business by all possible means'.<sup>16</sup> Many librarians wish this were more true than it is. As an instance of the 'greediness of officialism for power' he cites the desire of librarians to make the establishment of libraries compulsory. Along with his more convincing arguments he introduces remarks on library deficiencies which have now been rectified ; but it is not simply a case of 'all's well that ends well', and he says much that remains true. He concludes with the following interesting passage : 'Free Libraries are typical examples of the compulsory cooperation everywhere gaining ground in this country. Like all state socialism they are the negation of that liberty which is the goal of human progress. Every successful opposition to them is therefore a stroke for human advancement . . . At the present time there is a majority of Protestants in this country who, if they wished, could use their numerical strength to compel forced subscriptions from a minority of Catholics for the support of those religious institutions which are regarded by their advocates as of quite equal importance to a Free Library. Yet this is not done ; and why ? Because in matters of religion we have learnt that liberty is better than force. In political and social questions this terrible lesson has yet to be learned. We deceive ourselves when we imagine that the struggle for personal

liberty is over—probably the fiercest part has yet to arise. The tyranny of the few over the many is passed, that of the many over the few is to come. The temptation for power—whether of one man or a million men—to take the short cut, and attempt by recourse to a forcing process to produce that which can only come as the result of the slow and steady growth of ages of free action, is so great that probably centuries will elapse before experience will have made men proof against it. But however long the conflict, the ultimate issue cannot be doubted. That indispensable condition of all human progress—liberty—cannot be permanently suppressed by the arbitrary dictates of majorities, however potent. When the socialistic legislation of today has been tried it will be found, in the bitter experience of the future, that for a few temporary, often imaginary advantages we have sacrificed that personal freedom and initiative without which even the longest life is but a stale and empty mockery'. If it becomes the instrument of propaganda in the same way as the radio and the newspaper, the public library will be in almost the same position as O'Brien's Protestant group would be if it exercised power over Catholics, and it will be a social evil. Its potentialities for evil are as great as its potentialities for good.

Gutenberg made type movable, but today we are faced with the immense task of making the books themselves movable. This is a considerable problem, even when it relates to transport over short distances. And it ought to be possible, as a mere matter of physical librarianship, to move vast quantities of books at will to selected spots on the earth's surface, so that they may be re-radiated from those points in the normal course of service, paying particular attention to areas that seem to be in danger of intellectual isolation, and leaving alone areas that desire to be left alone. When truth is forced upon a man it ceases to be his truth. The same difficulties lie in the way of this programme that obstruct the movement and exchange of other commodities, and of men also. These are more moral and intellectual than commercial or physical difficulties. For society has hedged round the simplest physical act with numberless restrictions. But fortunately men of learning in impoverished areas, whose need is greatest, are becoming more insistent in their demand for books. The effectiveness of the demand is by far the most important single element in the success of the supply.

It may be thought that the preceding paragraphs have shown

too little feeling for the pageantry of societies and for the poetry of vast, collective social enterprises. But these sentiments are dangerous. In all of us there is something of the fanatic, and we only too easily feel the fascination of belonging to a great society, which has a gigantic, superhuman task to perform; it needs us, although it is so great and we are so small; it loves us and longs to absorb us into itself. We, in our turn, are afraid to be alone, and long to lose ourselves and to surrender, thereby to obtain the human warmth which society can else deny us. This pull exerted on us by an abstract notion of society is reinforced by the symbolism which usually accompanies a pathological state (in this case the symbolism of stripes and stars, medals, swastikas, and Big Ben) and is probably a form taken by the universal impulse to commit suicide. Our aim should be to emphasise not this impulse, which produces human torpedoes, but the vital needs of the civilised individual that can be met by librarianship.

Sometimes it is said that the rights which an individual has against society imply corresponding obligations towards society on his part. But the right of freedom of thought is not granted to a man by society, and carries with it no obligations to society. It does imply obligations, but they arise from the relationship of each separate man to every other, and consist in the duty to respect that other's freedom to think for himself. Other supposed 'rights' of an economic or political nature, which can only be 'enjoyed' by sacrifice of personality are valueless. They more often represent tasks imposed than privileges desired. And the community can be trusted to look after its interests, and to support and follow up its claims effectively. The individual is much less able to consult his interests, and on the occasions when power might become available to him for that purpose, his ethical standards will not allow him to follow a course of action implying disregard of the other human beings concerned. Hence he is entitled to support under the good British principle, now obsolescent, of upholding the underdog. It can be taken for granted that he will be expected to respond to claims far in excess of what a just philosophical balance of rights would require. But none of this should be misconstrued as implying that individuals have duties only to themselves: they are under the obligation, first and foremost, to contribute by thought and action towards bringing into existence the state of society which they consider best,

(and not simply best for themselves) rather than to obey unreflectively the edicts of society as it is now constituted.

A statement of C. M. Crawford provides an interesting basis for discussion of some of the sociological theory which librarians rightly regard as essential. The statement is 'Many suggestions have been made by educators, as they realise that society can only be strong when it strives to develop the full usefulness of all its people in enriching the common life, looking toward the re-education of the adult population to this new way of life. Widespread education, encouragement of each individual to seek the place in the game where he can play best, opportunity for advancement and development of leadership, all these will help to strengthen our society.'

'But Aristotle has said the 'education is *liberal* when a man studies with a view to *excellence*, without wish of gain'. This Greek ideal means 'freedom for the individual, freedom from ignorance, freedom of choice, and freedom from vacuity'. Where better could the public library fit than into this picture of *liberal* education?'<sup>13</sup>

The two halves of this statement threaten to cancel each other out. The second is sufficient in itself, but the views expressed in the first half tend in the opposite direction. According to the doctrine of the second part, the good society is the form of common life lived by free persons of independent judgement. It is an ideal, not an actuality, and demands for its actualisation the progressive elimination of leadership, since its individuals will judge for themselves and will not need to be led. This society can be neither strong nor weak: it is the concept of an ideal way of life, and no question of strength or weakness enters into the matter. But the society of the first half needs strength. What does it need strength for? Not to create the freedom of its members: wisdom, not strength, is necessary for this. In the circumstances in which we live, a progressive *weakening* of society is an indispensable condition of the exercise of that wisdom, since it is the strength of society that interferes with the freedom of its members. Life in contemporary society is not appropriately compared, as the statement compares it, to a game in which the individual plays his part. He chooses whether he plays a game, and will neither die nor suffer damage to the personality if he does not play. But his choice in regard to life in society is limited either to living in it or to suffering those ills if he does not. Thus society is in the position of being able

to exert far more coercion upon him than the team can exert. The strength which societies now seek is sought not for the individual good of each member but for the sake of collective prestige and successful competition with rival societies. This has nothing to do with the Aristotelian doctrine mentioned. It is sometimes suggested that since world cooperation demands the surrender of national sovereignty, societies should first become strong, independent and sovereign national units ; the argument is that we cannot surrender what we have not got. This is a misleading presentation. The sovereignty whose existence is a prerequisite of international well being is not the kind of sovereignty that aims at the acquisition of strength : it is the sovereignty of men over their own life and decisions which results from the ability of the community to assure justice for its individual members and to preserve the respect of man for man. Sovereignty of this kind is not the product of defiance toward external forces, although the sovereignty which is such a product may be necessary to prevent foreign interference with the exercise of the higher sovereignty. The latter sovereignty would have the same character if there were no other community external to the sovereign community. But if other communities exist, and at present they do, their true sovereignties will not come into existence by rivalry, but are merely instances of one and the same true sovereignty, their only differences being numerical, without which differences they would be indistinguishable. Surrender will already have been carried out by each community to its own members, so that the latter can be free. Once this has been done, there is no question of any further surrender for the sake of international cooperation, since every prospective cooperating community has the same sovereignty. But the true sovereignty of the community is harder to acquire than the sovereignty which is the result of strength, just as it is more difficult for the individual to achieve the personal sovereignty which allows his interests, thoughts, and desires to live together with mutual respect than to treat himself despotically, or to acquire power in relation to other individuals. The ultimate objective is not the *surrender* of tyrannical power, but its prevention, since liberty is not conceded to the individual by authority, but conceded to authority by the individual : only he has the right to permit.

The work of the librarian should be to assist a man to strengthen his conscience by liberal provision of all the necessary material of an

intellectual or literary nature. This is the librarian's duty to man as to a moral agent, quite apart from his duty to him as to a student, or artist, or seeker of recreation. The final judge of what is necessary is to be the prospective user, not society nor the librarian. On the other hand, the librarian may legitimately *help* a man to form his judgment by giving him access, through catalogues, bibliographies and shelves, to unsuspected interrelations of knowledge. Although the first responsibility for judgment rests with the individual, he could not judge wisely without the library, which places before him unexpected truths. A frequent question is whether the library should supply what people want or what they ought to have. The question is thus put as a dilemma, but it is hardly a dilemma, for the horns of a dilemma are mutually exclusive, whereas the alternatives here presented are not, for two reasons: first, people sometimes want what they ought to have; secondly the librarian's duty cannot solely be found in either alternative: he should neither give only what is requested and omit what he believes to be valuable, nor give only what he believes to be valuable and omit what is requested. He must give both, thus affording the individual the opportunity to form his own judgment by comparing the two. The justifiable desire to improve the reader should be carefully distinguished from unjustifiable violation of his right, or curtailment of his opportunity, to approve and disapprove. Some librarians have thought that the wish to elevate the reader means taking out of his hands the decision as to what he thinks good, but this is not the case. C. A. Part wishes to reject McColvin's view that the individual must decide for himself what he considers good.<sup>18</sup> Inconsistent as this statement of McColvin's may be with some of his others, it is proof against the criticism that 'slum clearance is carried out with or without the sanction of slum dwellers. The welfare of the community is considered more important than the wishes of the individual'. Whether it is right to move slum dwellers without their consent is questionable, but it is possible to move them. To change a person's mind without his choice is wrong, but it is possible to change it. Knowledge of good, on the other hand, can only be acquired spontaneously by effort which is self-originated; to remove ignorance concerning what is good, and to implant in its place knowledge thereof, is impossible.

Besterman says, in commenting on an article on book selection

by Goldhor, ' Few library subjects in the United States have received more attention than this. The aim is to discover the effects of reading and then to base a theory on the results. In short, a didactic philosophy of librarianship is implied. The writer makes this quite clear when he says that "it will limit itself to those wants of readers which the library wishes deliberately to develop and encourage". This is dangerous doctrine'.<sup>3</sup> It is even more dangerous if libraries come under central control. For then the reader gets what the central controller intends that he should get, and the central controller makes common cause with others like himself in other departments of public life, so as to promote the maximum homogeneity and efficiency; all the controllers meet together in government offices, and the authorities eventually see to it that no harmful literature reaches the public. Harmful literature is whatever is heretical or un-national. Some librarians have favoured such a system. Waples has pointed out that under totalitarian governments libraries enjoy 'social prestige' and sometimes reach their 'maximum efficiency and importance in the education of adults'. 'Their singleness of purpose', he says, 'simplifies and renders more efficient the selection, advertising and circulation of publications to a degree that public librarians in other parts of the world may well envy'.<sup>10</sup> In Belgium the law allows the librarian freedom in the choice of books 'excepting literature that is seditious, valueless educationally, or containing religious or political propaganda and controversy'. Norman Tomlinson thinks that this wording is 'only designed to limit the librarian to the provision of facts rather than opinions and to works of literary merit'.<sup>11</sup> But this is an indictment, rather than an attenuation: the absence of certainty in our best attempts to distinguish between fact and opinion should lead to respect for the right to express opinion; this respect is not incompatible with regard for fact, but it is incompatible with worship of facts.

Ballard believes that 'Because of its vital relation to public welfare the state not only undertakes to support, but also to protect the library, as well as other social institutions, against exploitation or pernicious influence'.<sup>12</sup> Public welfare thus comes to be identified with the advantage of the state, and the public library must struggle under the heavy burden of its title. Libraries are better conceived as learned than as social institutions. H. Putnam believes the library should avoid the circulation of books which

teach restless, irreverent, or revolutionary doctrines,<sup>11</sup> and L. V. Ballard adds 'pernicious, sordid and sensational' to the list.<sup>12</sup> These two writers alone thus cover a wide field. Deliberate exclusion of any description of literature is not part of librarianship. The doctrine implied in systematic exclusion is as pernicious as any of those mentioned, since it throws into jeopardy values as great as the values supposed to be threatened by them. But it differs from them in operating with certainty, while their operation is conjectural. Great literature under all the specified heads could easily be mentioned. Restlessness is often divine discontent; irreverence is a sign of independence of spirit, and is aimed at the unworthy as well as the worthy; revolutions, except the violent, are as likely as not to be desirable, and the best way of preventing the violent is to establish social justice; no one knows for certain what is pernicious; sordid things are better for being placed in the fresh air; and familiarity is the best killer of sensationalism. The library may be compelled to exclude literature by the holders of power; that is the exercise of power, not of librarianship; the former operates by force, the latter by choice.

But in remarking on another article Besterman says that it should have been 'compulsory reading for all Nazis'.<sup>4</sup> He evidently thinks that what is good for one's enemies is bad for one's friends, thus taking up the position of Polemarchus which was rejected by Socrates in the *Republic*.<sup>5</sup> It is better to be content to create the conditions in which truth can prevail. All seekers of truth are friends. But the initiative in seeking must be their own. The man who imposes compulsory reading is not remote: he is right in our midst. The educationist has always taken for granted that he has the right to impose reading on students who are under his care. In America librarians are forced to provide special rooms in which congested masses compete frantically to satisfy instructions on what they must read. Few question on fundamental grounds the right to impose reading, or on educational grounds its desirability. The English member of parliament W. J. Brown, writing on the book *I chose freedom* by Kravchenko, states frankly 'If I had one fraction of the power possessed by the communist regime in Russia, with which this remarkable book deals, I would make it compulsory reading for every adult in Britain'.<sup>6</sup> Librarians who care for the freedom of thought will compare this utterance by one who aspires to govern with the title of the book in question.

Freedom of printing is another concern of librarians. The question is connected with the rapid decline in the world's material resources. A powerful cause of despotic control and the curtailment of personal liberty is the mounting pressure of population on diminishing reserves of material. Reafforestation is essential as one means of preventing the soil erosion that is threatening the food supply of three-quarters of the earth's population, as well as on account of the forest products themselves. Shortage of food or paper is held to justify the interference of officials in every department of life that is remotely connected with either. Librarians should therefore promote knowledge of the need for reafforestation and of the means to it. A single edition of an American newspaper consumes twenty-four acres of forest,<sup>20</sup> and it is our duty to ensure that facts such as these are not hidden.

But other considerations than the economic are relevant to the freedom of publication. Under the influence of modern scientifically controlled team work authorship is passing out of the hands of the individual and is being vested in the group. The end of this process is the complete elimination of the author, his place being taken by the panel of editors. In America it is becoming increasingly difficult to secure publication for opinions, especially in the live form of periodical articles. Lengthy wrangling, or as it is termed 'cooperation' between the author and his prospective publisher must precede acceptance, and in the protracted correspondence involved the author is expected to defer to the opinion of experts, authorities, and editors. Nowhere is this practice more evident than within the American Library Association itself, as quotation will show: 'The typical project begins as an idea for a book. It is submitted to specialists or an appropriate committee for appraisal.' ('The project and the specialists are pre-eminently scientific concepts). 'The next step is an outline. This too goes out for criticism. Finally a manuscript is produced, criticized, usually revised, sometimes rewritten. And then it is ready for production' (science again) 'if approved by Editorial Committee and Executive Board and if the chief of the department estimates that sales will cover the costs or, in rare instances, if a subsidy can be obtained. The procedure takes months, sometimes years'.<sup>21</sup> 'A.L.A. publishing is a difficult craft to steer because there are so many pilots. The Executive Board charges the department with responsibility for paying its own way, and the Editorial Committee is the over-all

policy and planning group. But there are publication committees of the divisions and A.L.A. committees and boards which must be consulted on matters touching their fields of interest . . . it is hoped that the Fourth Activities Committee can find a way to simplify the machinery. . . . There are frequently three or four groups concerned with a single publishing suggestion. Months elapse, despite follow-up, before some are heard from'.<sup>22</sup> It is admitted that this 'sometimes discourages competent authors from accepting writing assignments because too many people have to be satisfied. During the past year two prospective authors . . . have turned down on that score invitations to prepare manuscripts'. These conditions are found within a profession whose primary aim should be to promote freedom of thought and expression in the world at large.

But the conditions described will provide a good training for those who aspire to expert regulation and control of the thought and expression of their fellow men. Ortega y Gasset, a noted scholar, thinks 'man must tame the book'.<sup>24</sup> The function which he would assign to librarians is described by Grace O. Kelley as a 'difficult but not impossible task', a statement which is all too true.<sup>25</sup> When it is a question of taming others there will always be some who are brave enough to rise to the occasion, despite the feats of endurance demanded by the mopping-up operations. 'Observing the "torrential abundance" of published books some good, some bad, he suggests that librarians be prepared to help in sifting this material through an understanding of the tasks of scholars and readers of all kinds. He goes further and suggests that librarians be charged with the organisation of the production of the book, thus eliminating the unnecessary and stupid while assuring important contributions'.<sup>26</sup> The American view of the library as 'an educational filtration plant' as L. V. Ballard scientifically expresses it<sup>27</sup> is brought into connection with the view of Ortega y Gasset by the Russian president of the Academy of Sciences of the U.S.S.R., S. I. Vavilov, the resemblance between the views of the three extending even to their choice of words. Filtration should naturally be carried out at the source so as to avoid inefficiency. 'In view of the vast torrent of literature now being produced' S. I. Vavilov states<sup>28</sup> 'a particularly meticulous filtering and improvement of manuscripts allowed to go to press is needed'. This is true: the filtering and improvement should be done by the author before he allows the manuscript

to go to press, and by no other person without his consent. We need to create the conditions in which better authors can arise, rather than to supervise and restrict our existing authors. He says further 'It is necessary by all *possible* means to save people from having to read bad and unnecessary books'.<sup>26</sup> None of us wishes to read books which he considers bad and unnecessary; hence it is logical for him not to wish others to read books which *they* consider bad and unnecessary. Many of us are diffident about supposing that we know what *is* bad and unnecessary. If we are to become totalitarians we shall be held back by no such abstract considerations as ignorance of what is bad. But if we are to promote the student's exercise of his own intelligence we shall take into account more important considerations than the mere *possibility* of saving him from reading what we think bad. President Vavilov proposes further that reviews 'should be published in journals or magazines specially destined for the purpose.' This proposal is a good one, but such publications should be *in addition to* the present diffuse publication of reviews. Otherwise the result would be the concentration of judgment in the hands of a few. The journals would be owned and managed by comparatively few, but read by comparatively many. Monopoly of judgement about what was unnecessary for the many to read would be the prerogative of reviews sponsored by the few and kept (as S. I. Vavilov suggests) in large central libraries. This would not lead to a widespread extension of learning and intelligence in the world's populations. Manuscripts would not be submitted, and censorship would be on minds, not on manuscripts. Initiation would lie with authorities and there would be no question of judgment being passed on unsolicited work. A decline in quality would be inevitable.

The librarian, then, should be ready to help everyone to judge for himself, in a world where deterioration in intellectual initiative and in actual intelligence is a threatening trend. The possibility of the latter deterioration is sufficient, but many will ask whether there is also a probability, and perhaps will think there is not. Some will base their argument not on scientific investigation, which is necessary and which is already partially completed, but on the doubtful proposition that it has not happened yet. But in a potentially dangerous situation the first thought is of escape. Man can by his own effort escape from the possible slavery of his mind and from a good deal of avoidable unintelligence, an effort which

will bring him greater advantages than any other, unless he prefers prestige and the opinion and favour of other men to his own intelligence.

But little of this appeals to the young : they rejoice in the opportunity to incur danger, even for ends that are not worth while or for no ends at all, but especially if there is a chance that ambition may be satisfied. They are willing to risk the loss of things that seem far more important to them than liberty. It is from the side of youth that the peril to freedom of thought and institutions may be anticipated, and it is mainly the young who are in possession of despotic authority in totalitarian states. This may seem paradoxical since it is in the young that we expect to find sincerity and freshness of ideas. But ideas of liberty are not fresh, and are not cherished by those who are on the look out for novelty or excitement.

It is not easy therefore for the librarian who values freedom of thought to find a philosophy which is true and at the same time appeals to the self interest of the individual. The latter requisite is in many cases necessary. For many persons attend best to what touches their self interest. The philosophy of liberty would seem to have a chance of success, since it is addressed to the interest of the individual. But there is unfortunately an important limiting factor, namely that the true interest of the individual is not always identical with what he takes to be his self interest. To many their liberty is not at all interesting, and they cannot consider it when security and livelihood are at stake.

Nevertheless the librarian's task is clear. He should keep thought free and fluid—his own thought and all other thought that comes within his province. If his library passes under a form of central control, he should take precautions that his librarianship is not influenced by any powerful person who will simplify everything for him—who will think, like Goebbels, that 'in the long run, basic results in influencing public opinion will be achieved only by the man who is able to reduce problems to the simplest terms and who has the courage to keep for ever repeating them in this simplified form despite the objections of the intellectuals'.<sup>2</sup> And he should regard with a healthy suspicion the 'organisation of knowledge' with which his profession has been so burdened in the past. The attempt to 'organise' knowledge too easily comes to imply a coherence theory of truth, with the loss of the reference to reality which underlies a correspondence theory of truth; the supremacy of the expert

who becomes the arbiter of truth ; an idealist theory of the state with an authoritarian attitude to the individual since he is less important than the organisation ; and the end of criticism.

Even the best ideas can become a menace when they are simplified, exaggerated and paraded, and those who are eager that freedom of thought and respect for persons should be valued universally should take care that they do not eliminate from their ideas the essential qualities of subtlety, moderation and uncertainty, and thus add one more to the list of dogmas. They always run some risk of kindling a movement, especially when, as today, there is a feeling everywhere that men are losing their birthright. There is a possibility, even in the prevailing apathy, that the ideas they advocate will be taken up by multitudes and organised. Truth can never prevail against organisation. Hence it is the duty of every individual to repudiate the appeal often made by lovers of freedom of thought and expression that all who think similarly should band together to resist despotic influences. This would defeat its ends. The individual must have courage to resist by himself. If he does so, there will be nothing to resist. But if he forms a group he furnishes tyrannous authority with excuse to intervene in the so-called 'common interest'. Many persons do resist interference but with 'interested' motives. This and the common interest are equally dangerous. Only the spread of knowledge can strengthen disinterested motives.

The usual fate of the thinker is either to be condemned as a bad man or to be thought smug or to be informed that the grapes of his betters are not sour. The accusation of wickedness is generally made from an authoritarian standpoint, no stronger proof of the wickedness being offered than an unwillingness to surrender without question to some accepted sociological or metaphysical dogma, the former probably of a neo-positivist, the latter of an Hegelian or evolutionary character. Man must fall in and keep step with the triumphant, progressive social route-march, and must not mar the sublime and absolute harmonies of an organic universe. This he is not only told that he must not, but also that he cannot do. Bliss, who believes that the individualist is wicked,<sup>7</sup> takes his stand on an authoritarian consensus (the *fiat* of the expert) flavoured with doctrinaire sociological theories of group personality, with a touch of the mysticism of social righteousness, and linked with an evolutionary order in such a way as to make everything in the universe subservient to man. But it is not man the enquirer that is here intended ; man

is simply the inevitable highest end-product of the 'natural order'. He is the finest thing created, stands at the centre of the universe, and need not condescend to enquire what else there is in it. Man is thus insolent towards the universe, and respect for truth is lost. This is what Russell aptly calls 'cosmic impiety'.<sup>8</sup>

Accusations of smugness are often made against the rationalist. It is true that no one can be sure whether he is living in a satisfied self-centred groove. This may still be his habitat although he is under the illusion that a vast spiritual world lies spread out before him, which it is given to few to see. His best antidote to comfortable pride is the desire to learn more. Individualism need not lead to pride if its aim is the discovery of objective fact and the free expression and communication of opinion. Due realisation of present ignorance and of the hard labour necessary to remove it can only produce humility and readiness on the part of the individual to avail himself of the chance to learn from all quarters, particularly from those who are his superiors in intellectual equipment or knowledge, and who are perhaps in the habit of putting him right. In the moments of despair when reason seems of little use he can still enjoy fairy tales, unless he lives where they are prohibited.

The taunt of sour grapes would be properly levelled against anyone who argued with resentment, suppressed inferiority, or hatred, except for injustice.

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### CHAPTER THREE

## SOME FUNDAMENTALS OF LIBRARY SERVICE

THE human being is the most ultimate of ends, his free condition his highest condition, freedom of thought the most fundamental element in his freedom, and the library one of the first essentials in maintaining it. The philosophy of librarianship which embodies this principle is not constructed on the usual basis of the library's obligations to society, but on the basis of the library's service to man and society's obligation to man, hence the obligation of society to the library which serves man. The individual should also have the chance to pursue what he believes to be his self interest.

Among librarians the prevalent attitude is to regard readers as citizens. Librarians thus reflect the standards of a world which is unable to regard a human person simply as 'man' but must think of him as 'economic man' or as 'citizen'. However, the best books are not written for citizens. Nor is it only as citizen that a man achieves the best of which he is capable, but as thinker, creator, and artist. Democracy which is not, as it is so often taken to be, an end in itself, does depend on citizens, and so does the compulsory financial support of libraries. But the ultimate purpose for which democracy exists is to allow men to pursue the good life in freedom. The ideas of free men roam beyond elections, committees, registrations, rates and taxes, and the national boundaries within which these are confined. It would be better if the right of access to the material necessary in the pursuit of truth could be regarded as an imprescriptible human right, rather than as conditional upon citizenship; this is especially desirable in international relations. No form of government, such as democracy, will serve as a satisfactory philosophical creed for librarians; plebiscites, parties, representation and the rest are machinery, not values. If he avoids putting his faith in a form of government, the librarian has a better chance of making common cause with librarians who operate in states differently governed. Though it is probably not desirable for all librarians to have the same philosophy (in any case it is impossible)

they should all have *a* philosophy; as librarians, not citizens, serving men, not citizens, their differences will lie within the orbit of librarianship and humanity.

The aim of education and of librarianship, whose purpose is educational although its methods and assumptions are different from those of education as commonly understood, ought not to be to produce the 'exemplary citizen', since this by definition makes men copyists. Affront is offered to man by his teacher if he is taught to take another man for his example, and is offered to himself by himself if he is willing to set himself up as an example. He should carry on in the search for truth, an occupation which, though it allows him time off, does not allow this for the purpose of posing as an ideal type. But he cannot always make headway in the acquisition of knowledge by himself, and will therefore need to join forces with others. It is as such workers, and not as citizens owing allegiance to political powers, that men are best related among themselves—relations which it is the work of libraries and universities to promote. If books produce scholars, who cares whether they are Americans? As Tolstoy has said,

'Men wish to unite, and to that end devise all means of union, but neglect the one indubitable means of union—the search for truth'.<sup>1</sup>

It follows that the librarian is under no obligation as librarian to distinguish himself as a citizen in any way, nor to be a leader in the community in which he serves, if being a leader means being prominent as a citizen. As a citizen he has the right to engage in public affairs if he so desires, and to perfect himself for leadership in them by attending to his education in the social sciences. Many would consider his participation in these activities as a citizen rather a duty than a right. However this may be, he has no such duty as a librarian, and a philosophy of librarianship need not concern itself with his activities under this heading, except in so far as they might prejudice his activities of librarianship. If he votes he should do so not out of partisanship or class hatred but in support of whichever side appears at the time least likely to interfere with free and creative thought. He should resist appeals to be instrumental in the surrender of part of the existing quota of freedom of thought, or to work as an intellectual team worker in conditions of present

unfreedom, for the sake of a supposedly better sort of freedom in the problematic future. He should be free to undertake political work if he wishes, and it is as necessary to uphold against British tyranny his right to engage in political activity, as it is necessary to defend against American tyranny his right *not* to do so. But he should avoid political bondage, for allegiance to truth is a steadfast apprenticeship, not permitting two masters.

Views which are in contrast to the above have been advanced by many. Given the appropriate circumstances their views would become oppressive. J. D. Russell thinks the community has the 'right to expect' that the librarian shall 'provide a certain amount of social leadership,'<sup>2</sup> and leadership is conceived as leadership of citizens. Some librarians will share this view. Men who wish to be leaders are far more numerous than men who do not. It is easy and gratifying to suppose that the community has the right to expect a man to engage in the very activities that he is most anxious to pursue. To look at the matter in this way brings him several advantages. In the first place the two propositions, that the community expects it and that he wishes to do it, confirm one another so remarkably that he cannot resist the conclusion that he has hit on the truth. In the second place he can, on suitable occasions, conveniently forget the second proposition, and represent himself as a martyr, doing what he has no mind to do but feeling bound to do it in the public interest.

The expectation of the community deserves closer attention. The community differs from the individual in the respect that what the community expects it sees that it gets, whereas the individual just goes on expecting. The community has prestige, and once it has come to expect something, it cannot afford not to secure it. For this would involve loss of face and of authority. It is useless to ask whether it is *good* that the community should have what it desires. The enquiry would have no more than academic importance and would be without influence on the course of events. The individual, on the other hand, has no prestige; the public counts among its members thousands such, and those who die are replaced. The community is important, and has vital transactions in hand that concern the common weal, so that it cannot turn aside for small details. A sense of proportion must be preserved, and it does not much matter if the individual asks for what *he* expects, and which it would not be bad for him to have, in vain.

What does the community expect? J. D. Russell suggests that the librarian should be educated as a leader by the development of his talents in five areas of activity: '(1) Church work, such as Sunday-school teaching, vacation-bible-school teaching, young people's organizations and similar services; (2) political activity in connection with party organizations, participation in political campaigns . . . ; (3) social service work, or work for private charitable or relief organizations; (4) assistance in informal educational organizations or in community uplift organizations such as neighbourhood clubs, Y.M.C.A., Y.W.C.A., settlement houses, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, etc.; (5) assistance with local defense organisations—a new situation growing out of wartime conditions, which offers young people unusual opportunities for participation in community leadership activities.'<sup>22</sup> From such a programme it is not a long step to the Russian subotniks. Yet many librarians think themselves inferior if they do not engage in some such activities, and those who train librarians often urge that these undertakings are a sign of public spirit. Underlying the programme is the assumption that leadership is good in itself. It is not. Much depends on the direction in which the leaders and the led are travelling. To determine the destination and the best way to it is more important and more difficult, requiring the thinker rather than the man of affairs. But even the destination is not everything. Motives are vital also, and no motives are more questionable than those which drive men to leadership. 'A Leader may be defined as that one of the Gadarene swine which runs the fastest. But the real Leader is the one who does not look to see whether there are any followers'.<sup>23</sup> It should be the work of the library to provide the atmosphere and the facilities for thinkers, and for those men of affairs who wish to renew or to preserve their contact with learning.

It is for the sake of the world of ideas and for the freedom of man to move about in that world that library techniques exist, and the consideration of library methods from this point of view is a necessary ingredient in the librarian's total consciousness of his aims. The diseases of modern society are liable to infect the library, and the librarian will need to do what he can to put his own house in order, if he is to fight successfully for the health of mankind. Display of power is one of the diseases. It is often possible for persons in authority to keep in their own hands all independence of thought and action in matters relating to the library. The librarian who enjoys a substantial measure of freedom (in Britain there are few)

should fulfil his duty to his colleagues by avoiding the cornering of initiative and allowing to them the greatest freedom consistent with the direction of affairs. This is a right of theirs, not a bounty on his part or a device for extracting more work, though it happens to have that effect. But since it is more important that injustice to individuals should be avoided than that a library policy should be put into effect with machine-like efficiency, some loss of unity of direction is to be tolerated. It is better to discuss freely and travel nowhere than to travel in the wrong direction without discussion. A corollary is that the man in authority should himself be free to express all his opinions and to try many of them out. For experiment should not be confined to the natural science laboratory. He should hand on the greater part of the freedom he receives.

As the independent thought for which libraries exist is required to be universal, the freedom of the librarian's own thought is included. But it is imperfectly reflected in some of his techniques. Even though the fault is often not his, it is better that he should be alive to possible deficiencies than blind to them. The fixity of the techniques of classification and cataloguing has not yet been overcome, and it is reinforced by indispensable brute materials like ponderous masonry, girders, heavy books and unadaptable shelves. Hence the necessity for making use of such modern ideas as easily accessible and convertible bookstacks, lifts, chutes, ramps, belts, trolleys, micro-techniques, and anything else that makes the mind's impedimenta more fluid. In entering into administrative arrangements the main thing to watch is that they do not constitute present or future shackles on the free play of ideas. If a system of substantially stocked branch libraries is adopted, branch librarians should enjoy a high degree of autonomy and individual initiative, and should be as independent of the central library as it is possible for them to be if the system is to hold together. The branch librarians should resist officious domination, and should be related to the central library as it may be to the regional library and the latter to the national library or government department. The same determination to follow truth without interference should be found everywhere. Under easy conditions of transport an educated public is better served by the concentration of resources in a large central library than by dissipation of stock.

Many library functions can be centralised, and this is justified if it makes possible more easy and rapid change. Centralisation

would appear to enable millions of errors to be scrapped at one stroke, whereas the separate localities would long flounder in the effort to make local rectifications and to keep themselves up to date. Whether the former in fact happens depends on courage and disinterestedness at the centre, and on the ability to withstand the power-orthodoxies to the full onslaught of which a planned and centralised administration exposes the central authority. Here, as so often, the virtue of machinery depends on the men who run it. Such are the temptations, that it is doubtful whether central authorities can be relied on to be humble enough to regard the rectification of their own mistakes as part of their life's work. Central control is generally used in the interest of the controllers. Authorities will seldom admit that they have made a mistake, and as mistakes are unavoidable, and the kind of mistake made by organisations is more perilous to others than the mistake made by the individual, centralised and authoritative librarianship carries with it the risk of the stabilisation of error. Centralised bodies must conceal their errors because prestige is involved and there is a danger of loss of confidence and consequent dismissal. Hence the mistakes of a powerful person are often not exposed or set right until he is retired or dead. This leads to delay in keeping abreast of the progress of knowledge. But if a man is not a member of a central governing body it is much easier for him to admit his errors. We do not lose confidence in him but think more of him for doing so. As he has freely admitted one mistake we regard this as presumptive evidence that he would have admitted others if he had made any, and that if he makes any in future he will acknowledge these also. Thus our trust in him increases, and this is understandable since it is partly trust in ourselves : we think that we are ourselves best able to estimate the rightness or wrongness of his beliefs, and to judge the actions to which they have led. But we should have no opportunity to do so unless he made the evidence available to us. When this has been done we can form our own opinion as to whether the errors he thinks he has committed really are errors. Truth is more likely to make its way to the daylight through a combination of magnanimity and integrity than through official pronouncements and authoritarian decisions. But questions that do not seem to concern truth and individual freedom of thought so vitally might at a venture be left to central bodies : these might include such matters as hours of work and salaries, as opposed to the interpretative questions connected with books. Centralisation is not the *inevitable* precursor

of totalitarianism ; the connection is one of overwhelming probability, not of logical inevitability.

Librarians should aim at securing full facilities not only for the distribution of books to homes but for the provision of quiet and ample library accommodation for students, since many are prevented by the pressure of public opinion exerted through other members of their families, cohabiters of their houses, and neighbours, and by noise and discrimination, from forming independent judgements on matters distorted by mass interests. But no man should be compelled to visit a public library, either by the direct compulsion of a tyrannical government (such as a government that issues from public libraries essential personal documents not obtainable elsewhere) or by the indirect compulsion of having no suitable home in which he can think. Every man should enjoy freedom of choice whether he will read in the ideal library or the ideal home. But let him not suppose that in the exercise of that choice he will be unmolested. He will have to uphold his claim to think against those who take their stand on the 'common interest', and in its name inform him that the modern world of bombs is a serious place, and that it will not allow him to hide from 'world forces' in the citadels of the contemplative life. The essential freedoms, they will tell him, demand that he should come out and fight in the crusade. In the interest of the freedom of 'All' (the modern God) he must relinquish his own. 'Contrary-mindedness' is irreverence to All. The lesson of total war is that 'the world is not going to let us alone and that not any one of us, go where he may, can hide from the forces that are loose amongst us.'<sup>21</sup> This is what the leader and the man of public spirit will tell him in order to make him ashamed. If 'the world' will not let 'us' the individuals alone, it must be something different from 'us.' What is it? It is stated to be something with forces that are in our midst, and these appear to be on the prowl for those who hide away to think. The police, in liaison with the other national henchmen, carrying out the will of All, will answer to the description. But if the 'world' is not different from 'us' it depends on 'us' whether we allow ourselves to 'hide away' and think. And if the 'world' is a loose expression for 'circumstances' or 'problems,' these demand for their solution freedom of thought more than anything else. Freedom of thought is the best guarantee of the freedom of action which we desire.

The library can do much to rectify the false emphasis that is

placed on certain kinds of ideas by educational systems. National educational systems achieve only a limited success in the effort to show people how to set about finding truth. It is seldom their aim to show their students how to do this. Instead they aim to impart supposed facts. Often the alleged facts turn out to be no more than dogmas. Indeed they are in part selected as such, with the purpose of inducing the governed to take the same view of what they ought to do and desire as the legislators. Particularly is this the case where the facts relate to the history, geography, philosophy, way of life, art, music, manufactured articles, or prospects for the future of the country whose schooling the pupil is obliged to undergo. It should continue to be possible for him to recover from the worst effects of this education in libraries. But only determination will ensure the possibility. 'The state assumes that the public library is an essential part of its educational system' writes Ballard.<sup>20</sup> The truth of this, and the fact that it is a cause of satisfaction to him and to many others, indicate the danger.

Too readily it is assumed by educationists that our judgement is the inevitable product of our background and environment, hence the effort, praiseworthy enough in itself, to make these as perfect as possible in the cultural sense. But the assumption is one of the forms taken by determinism, and it fails as a recipe for the mass production of wisdom. It supposes that wise judgement in particular cases will be automatically produced by general training, whereas specific training in power of discrimination is necessary. Libraries should place all the evidence at the disposal of students released from their education, and introduce them to the techniques of research where such instruction is desired. This should be incorporated in the instruction given on the method of using the library, and should take as its starting point a demonstration that one or two propositions whose truth the student has been encouraged to take for granted, are false, and can be proved false bibliographically from sources available to all. From the falsehood the student should be led to the half truth, and shown that although he has not been entirely wrong in holding certain beliefs, his knowledge has been woefully incomplete. The purpose of these pieces of instruction, which could be quite short, should not merely be to reveal the existence of a multitude of points of view, but to arouse a desire to find the true one by consulting and weighing printed evidence. It is particularly important that all heterodoxy should be well represented on the

library shelves, and that there should be a plentiful supply of books giving the opinions of writers of other nationalities than one's own. For the sake of authenticity these should be books published in the countries concerned as far as possible ; this form of authenticity is a guarantee of the existence and expression of the opinions in question, not of their truth, though it often suffices to prove the actual truth or falsehood of other opinions. Although nationals are generally unreliable guides to their countries, they are often effective in demonstrating that other guides are equally unreliable.

There is a duty also towards those who are still undergoing formal education. Library stock should be selected and assembled with the idea that some students will have the courage to turn aside from the enforced and recommended booklists in order to exercise their liberty of choice. If there are such, the libraries must not fail them, for it is upon them that the future of mankind depends. We should remember also that although demand creates supply, books cannot be demanded by readers who have no idea that such books exist ; in this respect supply creates demand. The librarian should first inform himself of what has been printed, and then pass the knowledge on. Enlightened schools will make use of the library services provided for them specially, but this arrangement is less productive of good since the demand is an official, not an individual demand, and libraries are bound to satisfy it, and not to dictate. For the library facilitates self-education, and does not directly educate, except in the use of its resources. For this reason it is unfortunate that many writers speak of the library purpose as an educational 'mission' to society.<sup>4</sup> It is better to expose missions than to add to their number : missions are always intolerant but seldom successful, which is something to be thankful for. The librarians of many colleges encounter a discouraging helplessness in the students, who cannot be induced to understand the use of bibliographies, and essential research tools.<sup>3</sup> But it is no solution of the problem to increase library service to such an extent, or rather in such a way, as to increase the dependence of the student on the outside aid of the library. To follow Ranganathan, who thinks that the keys to learning should be primarily for staff use in aid of readers, would be inadvisable.

Miles and Martin have suggested that it is both 'inevitable, and on the whole wise, that the administration of public libraries on all levels will be under the direction of the teaching profession'.<sup>13</sup>

In regard to inevitable events there can be no question of wisdom, so if it is inevitable it is certainly not wise. To regard the future character of libraries as inevitable is less a sign of pessimism (or as the authors would have it, optimism) than of the apathy of the man who throws in his lot with the crowd. This action (if it deserves the name) will indeed make it inevitable that the educational crowd will have its way ; but the inevitability is a result, not a determinant, of the action. Vitz makes the good comment 'The class-room method is eminently suited to beginners and to large numbers who wish to cover the same ground often gone over before. When, however, the interest is in the byways and quiet retreats of knowledge or in new frontiers, then the individual becomes the important determinant. With such help as he needs and finds, he experiments, travels, thinks, and reads. The school typically emphasizes standardization and necessarily must regiment when classes, curriculums, credits and school terms are involved. But the school is weak on adaptation to individual needs, interests and talents when these diverge far from the norm.'

While it is impossible for the individual to isolate himself from his inheritance and from the environmental influences that have made him what he is or prevented him from becoming what he would have been, there are occasions when it is essential that he should be free to cut himself off as completely as possible from contemporary mental associations. To this end every library offering student-accommodation should be provided with separate rooms for study. They should overlook open country or lawns and trees not too formally laid out, for many find that it is a material help in the formation of independent ideas to allow the eye to rest from time to time on nature as little suggestive as possible of the works of man. Those who prefer to look out on streets, or not to look anywhere, can fairly easily be provided for under present conditions.

In its relations with the reader the library should treat him as a single person. Here a misconception might arise. The librarian's attitude to readers should not be based on the assumption that they are equal, and that the individual's claim to attention is justified on the ground that he is equal to every other and has an equal claim with every other to library service. Men are in the most important respects not equal, and equality is not the foundation of democracy. No soil is so well prepared for tyranny as the community of supposedly equal members. All slaves tend to be treated as equally

unfree. The honest librarian will perhaps be able to confirm this from his own experience, for he may have found that if he tries to treat people equally he ends by meting out somewhat scurvy treatment to them. He will thus be able to observe the origins of tyranny at first hand. There is only one possible vindication of the crude notion of equality: it may at least cause the wealthy, powerful or ostentatious person to receive the same attention as the ragged enquirer. But this may be unfair to the latter, whose needs are probably greater. Readers' needs differ in quality and quantity according to their abilities, purposes, and other factors.

Some of their needs are recreational. The call upon the library to satisfy these arises simply from man's desire to enjoy himself. But many theorists do not like to think that a man enjoys himself, since he is apt to do so in his own way, thus providing an inconvenient exception to the theory into which they intended him to fit. The perfect solution of their problems would be to prove that a man *cannot* enjoy himself. He would then be the victim of an illusion, and would require help from them. The evidence to the contrary is so strong that not even the best theorists have yet succeeded in proving that man cannot enjoy himself. But some of them have come fairly near. The psychologists tell us that a man does what he does in response to irresistible forces beyond his control. The medical mind reassures him that recreation is good for him. The sociologist, followed by a majority of librarians, says that recreation is socially useful, and that it is 'good public policy'<sup>19</sup> to promote it. Thus we have a picture of the reluctant efforts of the individual to enjoy himself from a sense of duty.

Since readers should not be treated *en masse* there is reason to doubt the wisdom of G. O. Kelley's remark 'Groups . . . working toward a common purpose can be considered, in a legal or socio-logical sense, a kind of person or individual'.<sup>5</sup> It is true that individuals *can* be so considered, just as I can consider a blue griffin. But no actual person is being considered when we create the legal fiction of personality, which is merely useful when we wish to prosecute several persons at once, or more often, to them when they unite to prosecute us. Some librarians take pleasure in these circumstances. 'The Appropriate Body' (the group) 'shall serve notice upon any authorities in the new area' (including the individuals concerned) 'which have not yet agreed, informing them that the scheme will come into operation on a given date and that they will be compulsorily included

therein'.<sup>22</sup> So much for the group personality in the land of John Stuart Mill. In the sociological sense, too, a group *can* be considered as a person, but only if we subscribe to Rousseau's theory of a general will, and accept along with it the theory that there is a common good, and then submit to an authoritarian interpretation of the latter, or go to prison. It is against the false theory of groups that the philosophy of liberty is aimed. And in using the expression 'a kind of individual' we should remember that as individuals things cannot be classed : this can only be done by sacrifice of individuality. Hence arise the racial conflicts, which are only made possible by classifying the individual as a kind and refusing to see him as he is. No man should of his own accord describe himself as belonging to a race : he should leave this to his enemies. The least harmful result of generalising about nations or groups (Americans, Scotsmen, Jews or readers) is that the individual is burdened like an ass with the arbitrarily defined virtues and vices of the clan to which, seldom by his own choice, he belongs. He should be helped by the librarian to disengage himself from such groups. The idea of joint personality exercises a fatal grip over the fascist mind, and the modern theories of the supreme state are only a newer manifestation of the mediaeval notions of the corporate personalities of church, monastery, and guild. Tompkins and Rogers in a well conceived article make the point that dictatorships and totalitarianism are rendered possible by the weakness of autonomous groups.<sup>17</sup> This is true : groups are necessary for the protection of rights. But only the respect of man for man within the group and outside it will save the whole society from harbouring a multitude of dictatorships instead of only one.

It is the false philosophy of the group, and not the group, that should be rejected in librarianship. Individuals cannot actualise their potentialities without other individuals. A community of thinking men, whether as small as a study-circle or as large as the world of learning, is an inspiring and worth while community. The group must be ever on its guard against doing the very thing that the individual should strive to do—to act as one man. Library thought is generally dominated by the notion that whatever is social is good, and social phenomena are defined as group phenomena. To be one of a group is therefore good, and to be outside a group is to be anti-social with regard to the group, and therefore bad. This philosophy forgets that everything depends on the nature of the group—on whether it is constructed solely for the benefit of every separate indi-

vidual composing it, and functions in such a way as to harm no single individual inside or outside it. Only then will belonging to the group be good, and it will be good not because the connection is social, or merely because the group is many, but because the connection enables every single person to actualise more completely his own true character. In other words, whatever is social is good only as a means ; the qualities of bad societies are thus easily explained. Those social activities which are good are founded on the respect of every man for every other man's personality and intellectual separateness. Group ideals are well stated by J. Powell, one of them being 'to think differently, together, about the same things'.<sup>16</sup> The natural instinctual drives of animals including men do not contribute to the formation of this kind of group, but the one that exists for cruelty and the 'mobbing' of the individual.

There need be no incompatibility between the scholarly devotion of the librarian to knowledge and his duty to the reader, if he and they form a community of seekers of truth. Such a community exists for the free interchange of ideas, and is the community most worth belonging to. Knowledge may be understood to include not only the relation of the mind to truth but the whole realm which is revealed to the superior insight of musician and artist. The apparent incompatibility between the learned library and the library serving a general public arises as much from the self centred character of the former as from the ignorance of the users of the latter. With slightly more inspiration the learned librarians and the not so learned public could make common cause. The best relation between librarian and reader exists when both are pursuing the same thing, and are therefore sharing the books. The pursuit of knowledge is peculiar in that it causes in its followers the paradoxical conviction that their object can best be attained by sometimes forgoing its pursuit in order to allow its pursuit by others. If then the man who seeks knowledge can share with another the means of acquiring it, how much the more easily can he share material possessions, which he values less. The librarian often deprives himself of books so that readers may have them, and to say that he is in any case forced to do so would be at least ungracious and probably also untrue. Following the thought through into the international sphere, the people or nation, through an international system of exchange, limits its use of the books it needs so that other nations may use them. Such nations, having shared books, which are among their priceless possessions not on grounds of

rarity but as avenues to truth, will naturally share also raw materials and manufactured goods, with the same bountiful generosity with which they now freely bestow on others their out-of-date armaments. Hence the importance of libraries to world peace and unity.

In some respects what has just been said is counter to accepted practice. Librarians sometimes keep the best books for themselves unless there is a risk of detection, and then place them at public disposal with display. It is also thought that no nation must weaken itself by allowing its book stock to be dangerously depleted, since it can never be certain that books will be returned by foreigners, and many books and periodicals supply clues to secret information. And it is the clear business of every nation to make sure of its own supply of raw materials first, and if possible to get also the raw materials it does not need in order to sell them at a profit.

So as to ensure that we are concerned only with the intellectual values it would be better, in discussing libraries in various parts of the world, to set aside the national names of those parts. Instead we could use a great name of literature, art or music, to be chosen by lot, the only stipulation being that the name chosen should not belong to the nationality of the area represented nor to any politically subordinate group included in the area. We should thus avoid all taint of ideology, and there would be no risk of imputing say to Shakespeare the narrower sort of nationalism. Names taken from the creative arts mentioned would symbolise the best achievements of the human spirit, whereas names of statesmen, scientists, historians or philosophers would be too easily identifiable with an ideology or with an outlook in other respects harsh, narrow or prejudiced. The actual drawing of the lot could be performed by the janitor with the longest period of library service in the area from a list prepared by the library association of the area and presented to him by the director of the chief library of the area, such as the British Museum or the Library of Congress. Should the janitor be unwilling he could be empowered to name a deputy, without loss of the substantial gift which would accrue to him on account of the honour of the occasion. The necessity of taking part in the ceremony would on the other hand be a declared condition of the chief librarian's tenure of office, and would be one of the safeguards needing to be devised to deter persons of a dictatorial, uncivil or undemocratic temperament from coveting control. But since the names chosen would soon be encumbered with the barnacles of out-

worn ideas, they could be changed every five years. This would help to keep ideas of librarianship young and fluid. In historical retrospect the work of each section in its five year period would be seen to have made a distinct and clearly defined contribution to librarianship, and not merely to local librarianship. Little difficulty would be experienced in this respect, for the name assigned to the region would stimulate a strong interest in the artist, writer or musician in question. For example, the Schubert region would feel bound to muster its resources of scholarship and talent so as to publish and perform the immense musical output of the composer, now largely unknown and inaccessible. The name Brontë region might fall to the United States Libraries and Emerson region to the European. National names would not of course disappear from other departments of life than librarianship, but would be retained for the purposes for which they are best suited, such as engaging in legal disputes and making war. But a useful beginning would have been made towards freeing our minds from unnecessary burdens.

Schemes of this kind envisage the ultimate establishment of international library systems. It is indeed along functional lines, rather than politically, that world unity has the best chance of success. But the existence of cooperation on a world scale would not in any way lessen the need for vigilance in the interest of freedom of thought. Much would depend on how the international authority came into the possession of power. If it arose by initial acts of consent there would be, on the short view, more reason to suppose that it would be wise, tolerant and disinterested. But on the long view the position thus won would always be exposed to the renewed attack of power impulses driven for the moment underground, and governments freely constituted still require to be closely watched. This is as true when they are professional as when they are political governments.

There is some possibility that more federations may come into existence. Some political federations are already in being and others would be welcomed by many. This also is a question which impinges on matters of intellectual freedom and is therefore the concern of librarianship. Federation in itself, and without regard to ultimate purposes, is not only useless but dangerous. It creates more governmental machinery, more preoccupation with externals, wider and more elaborate opportunities for uniformity. A vivid sense of values and discussion of them through literature is all the more essential when political powers reach out further and further. Discrimination

between the true and the false in speech, writing and print is indispensable when a federal government attempts, as every government does, to gain for itself the widest possible support by eloquent references to principles of liberty and humanity.

The impersonal remoteness of central planning, as carried out by men who are not devoted to knowledge, is fatal to liberty. But regional cooperation for intellectual ends is desirable if it can be carried out without risk of mental standardisation and the imposition of orthodoxy. The danger is seldom apparent till it is too late. The usurper stays in the background while his unwitting future servants build up their machinery with devotion ; then when all is ready to receive him the powerful, government supported director steps in and becomes master overnight, his existence hardly having been suspected before, since it was illumined by no achievements of scholarship. The poor servants clap their hands with delight at the unexpected turn things have taken. They are only too glad to hang up the portrait of their new director, who has given them an increase of salary far more substantial than would have been possible by any other method, a greatly increased sense of security, perhaps a shorter working week, and the greater feeling of importance which is proper to those who belong to the governing officialdom. In comparison with these tangible advantages the remarks of philosophers about values no one else can understand, and drawbacks no one can see, seem very far fetched.

The best safeguards against the transference of allegiance to other authorities than the authority of truth are not constitutional safeguards, or safeguards incorporated into administrative machinery, but are in the personality, and operate whenever a person has the prospect of obtaining his own little private authority, or his little store of wealth, in exchange for a tacit understanding that he will behave and think as one of a group. These safeguards stand a chance of being effective whether or not they find indirect expression in administrative provisions, whereas administration generally produces whatever effect is intended by those who work it, notwithstanding its character. It is not enough to make the consent of the participants a condition of the carrying out of centralised planning, unless individuals are interested in what is happening to them, and have the courage to withhold consent. Today it is customary to grant options and at the same time to create circumstances which make it impossible, without superhuman determination, for the individual to exercise

them. The main difficulties occur when a larger governing body exerts pressure on a smaller : it is in such contests that the individual incurs most danger of being overridden or obscured from view while business is being transacted.

The risk of tyranny cannot be eliminated by even the most carefully worked out constitutional methods. A vigorous intellectual life sustained by ample provision of books is more effective. Nor can insidious orthodoxies be avoided by even the strongest tradition of liberty : indeed when liberty has become a tradition it is too late to hope for its preservation. Dictatorship is the manifestation of a dictatorial element ingrained in human nature, and has no need of psychopathology for its explanation, although we have seen how it may be reinforced by manias of various kinds. The tyrant in all of us is waiting for the particular combination of circumstances which will enable him to come forward. These circumstances are possible, and the situation has dangerous potentialities, when liberty degenerates into equality, since this involves loss of individuality.

Benjamin Franklin in 1731 founded the Library Company of Philadelphia, a subscription library. This kind of library, he thought, 'improved the general conversation of the Americans, made the common tradesmen and farmers as intelligent as most gentlemen in other countries, and perhaps contributed in some degree to the stand so generally made throughout the colonies in defense of their privileges.'<sup>6</sup> This noble utterance which aims, to put it paradoxically, at making all men equally superior, could guide us today. We now have the free public library in place of the subscription library, and it faces other problems connected with the defence of privileges. The repulse of the external oppressors of the modern world requires that men band together so firmly that their bonds cannot afterwards be dissolved, and are liable to be reinforced by rapidity of communications, scientific automatism and efficiency, and by the dictatorship of an all-pervading public opinion. The would-be external thus gives place to the actual internal tyrant. The latter is a product of democracy, yet we know of no other framework than the democratic within which to solve the problems that face us. If these problems cannot be solved by means of ideas they cannot be solved at all, since force does not solve problems but replaces them with new ones. Ideas must remain freely communicable in books, periodicals, microfilms, and the discussion to which these lead.

It seems likely that the American idea of the library as 'a most

efficient agency not only for Americanization but also for the propagation and consolidation of national conceptions of citizenship, Christianity and democracy<sup>17</sup> must eventually encounter its testing time. These are all mass beliefs and, however attractive they may seem to those who hold them, dogmas. They are expressed in a more child-like form by the *College book of American Literature*, when it says 'It is not certain that Henry James belongs to American literature for he was critical of America and admired Europe'.<sup>18</sup> Every nation that moves as a phalanx faces the ultimate danger of moving as one man in the wrong direction. When efficiency reaches ever higher levels there is a mounting risk that the forfeiture of liberty may be carried out swiftly and suddenly : this can happen as soon as willing service comes to be required with implied sanctions or veiled threats. The danger disappears if American libraries, with their immense obligations to American society, fulfil also their obligations to the individual simply as a human being. They have well designed tools for the breakdown of uniformity in the shape of highly developed techniques of personal help and readers' advisory services, and they have a large number of able men and women librarians. Unfortunately the average Englishman or American does not regard himself as an individual, because he is an average Englishman or American, and this description includes even able librarians. Perhaps the British sometimes entertain doubts as to whether they are free men, as indeed by this time they should, whereas the American has less experience of these doubts but conforms gladly to the conventions without conforming to which it is so difficult for him to secure employment. Both Englishmen and Americans strike more often for money than for freedom, and an increase of money usually means some loss of liberty. Among those who would be willing, in many countries, to compromise freedom of thought for money, both those who understand something by that freedom and those who understand nothing by it, it is hard not to suppose that there are librarians. Society forces us to be mercenary in order to exist. When librarians are both mercenary and underpaid this combination cannot fail to have devastating effects on the pursuit of truth.

Despite premonitions, it is to be hoped that American libraries are less liable to witness infringement of liberty of thought than are British. The American has a fairly good idea of his individual requirements and is not docile where his interests are concerned. He does not allow his obedience to be taken for granted, nor does it

seem to him a matter of primary importance to preserve a state of society which depends on unquestioning subservience to those who happen to be in office, irrespective of their fitness. A detached observer, A. Predeek, remarks that in America local individualism and very often narrow-mindedness are strong, and local authorities are jealous of their rights.<sup>7</sup> American libraries are in close touch with universities and in at least one instance the public library is in the same building with the university. American learned institutions, including libraries, have individual reputations for scholarship and service, and many of them are privately owned. British libraries on the other hand have never done justice to the independence of British scholarship, and few of them, particularly few public libraries, are distinguished sufficiently to prevent them from being swept easily into a common net, or as the administrators prefer to regard it, a network, with possible further deterioration in individuality among the institutions, their custodians, and those they serve. American libraries are situated in states with different legal systems whose regulations end at the frontiers ; even in applying for a birth certificate the American citizen must consider the laws of the state concerned, and a book of 136 pages has been written in explanation of the various regulations of the 48 states and the District of Columbia for the issue of these certificates.<sup>8</sup> From the point of view of planners such circumstances are unfortunate. Inconvenient as they may be, they are of the kind that constitute obstacles to regimentation and the transmission of error. Nevertheless the powers which a central government can rapidly acquire are surprising and alarming, and are the most serious defect of equalitarian democracy, as de Tocqueville and Plato before him saw.<sup>9</sup> And they are at all times liable to be strengthened by fear or hatred.

American libraries are so to speak manned by women. In 1940 nearly nine-tenths of librarians were women.<sup>10</sup> This sex, with noteworthy but not always well-known exceptions, does not think on a world scale. The same is true of the opposite sex. The only difference is that narrow-minded men gain more power and authority than narrow-minded women, and are therefore more dangerous. Doubts about women librarians are expressed by some, for example by McColvin and Nowell. It is men who doubt and women who do not, a fact which is enough to show that the occasion is not one for rational enquiry but for the airing of prejudice. America has demonstrated beyond all rational doubt the equal ability of American women

librarians. The misfortune is not in the women but in the increasing possibility that American men and women will think as America thinks and act as America acts. British libraries on the other hand perhaps have the advantage of not being manned by efficient men and women but by men who are incapable of taking the British way of life seriously and who appreciate the beauty of muddling through, which they are skilled in superintending. There is no more effective bar to despotism than muddling through, and successful muddle is recommended by the fact that tyrannical rulers strive to remove it. They cannot bear to think that any individual can be different and continue to do what he thinks best in his own way, beyond the reach of their power. Successful muddle allows the individual to do his work unobserved, and is therefore suitable to the man who does not live for the sake of being observed. Unfortunately this most beautiful of all arrangements can soon be scientifically cleaned out of a small country like Britain, and is even threatened in its ancestral home, China.

Much that has been written on books and libraries with the intention of reassuring does not effectively because it is too sanguine. In a good article D. H. Stevens said in 1942 'the international aspects of learning will revive again. . . . Free men are still free to think. . . . This race of books against destruction is temporary. Man's success in saving the past for the future by means of print is one of the fine records of civilization. . . . In spite of fire and water knowledge will persist by means of these two transmitting agents, the man and the book. Always and everywhere, any library that is kept as an open storehouse of universal knowledge will be an island of influence toward democracy and freedom'.<sup>11</sup> Faith is necessary not less now than in 1942. But it requires to be strengthened by an awareness of the conditions on which blessedness depends. There are failures as well as successes to record in man's haphazard efforts to save the past for the future by means of print; whether knowledge will persist as described will depend entirely on the determination of those who set it above all else. And knowledge must be taken to include knowledge of the incipient germination of the lusty weeds that drive it out.

In similar vein H. M. Wriston writes that 'intellectual unity is exemplified in libraries and in universities' since institutions of this kind transcend national interest'.<sup>12</sup> These comforts need to be supported by an analysis of the conditions under which it will be possible for universities and libraries to transcend national interest and yet continue to exist. In most countries the mere fact that the

universities and libraries continue to exist is sufficient proof that they do *not* transcend national interest. The German universities during the war of 1939-1945 were predominantly National-Socialist, the Russian libraries transcend national interest only with a view to making the whole world a nation, the British universities have always supplied the finest flower of those who uphold the name of Britain, and the American universities are dedicated to the American way of life. To pretend that these facts are otherwise is to imagine that the ideal is actual, which does not help in making it so.

Suppose a traveller visits a nation where all the clocks are electric and are driven by nationalised electricity drawn from the mains. Some of the load has had to be diverted to projects of supreme national importance, with the result that all the clocks are wrong but they agree among themselves. Perhaps the man enjoys the unique advantage since he has friends in a university, of being in touch with an observatory, from which he can obtain a highly confidential computation of the time on astronomical principles. If he were so foolish as to declare openly the astronomical time he would be lucky to escape with scratches, since every one knows what the time is : it is given out by a multitude of dignified clocks which regulate business. But if he should feel roused to support his statements by arguments his conduct would be anti-social and subversive. Society could not tolerate such undesirables and unless, in modern phraseology, he could be 'forced to cooperate' he would have to be extradited. But the non-cooperative library that would set truth above the national interest could not enjoy the benefits of extradition. What then ? The best hope lies in the forces of truth seekers being so strong that authority cannot risk the loss of face that might be involved in contest with them. Even the so-called 'group mind' is sometimes ashamed of revealing its ignorance. But the all-powerful tyrant feels no such compunction.

The planners of library administration are often sanguine. To say as Vitz says of Joeckel 'on the important issue of federal control the author is definite and emphatic. General control and administration should remain with the states and the units of local government . . . Federal supervision should be only in the interests of efficient administration',<sup>14</sup> seems like drowning the difficulties with emphasis. There is little doubt what *should* be, but it is not so easy to control events as to be controlled by them. 'Efficient administration' covers everything with devastating thoroughness, and is always the

excuse of planners. Under cover of this, the relentless psychology of uniformity and conformity takes over. Only an all-round reduction of mere efficiency can preserve the higher values, and wherever we find it we should regard mere efficiency as a symptom, and ask what destruction of personality has produced it. Personality must come first if we are to make sure of our liberty.

At present the librarian is forced to be an efficient business man because of the niggardliness of society and its custom of placing a higher valuation on an external appearance of businesslike method than on free and active thought. One of society's duties to the librarian is to avoid presenting him with the dilemma of efficiency or poverty. Some argue for efficiency on the ground that it would be foolish to make things harder for ourselves by inefficiency. But it is only the single operation or isolated sequence of operations that is made easier for us by efficiency. On the whole, the result of the attitude of mind that is implied in devotion to efficiency is not that we are set free to do things that are supremely worth while, but that we are tied down to perform more of the operations in question. Our time and energy being limited, we are bound to deny to one kind of activity the time and energy that we expend on another. We ought therefore to retain and perfect the efficiency of the techniques which we use as means to our ends, but at the same time reduce greatly the quantity of time and attention which we allow them to claim from us.

Whatever ought to be done ought to be done efficiently, and there can be no quarrel with efficiency which thus fulfils its function. But the complexity of modern organisation permits and encourages efficient performance of one operation for the sake of efficient performance of another, the latter being essential for efficiency in a third, and so on endlessly. Hence it is possible to spend an active and socially approved life in efficiently dovetailing operations together, and in considering only how actions are performed, not whether they are the actions which are most worth performing and are likely to bring us what is most worth having.

By resolute decentralisation, wherever centralisation leads to nothing better than efficiency, and by regional self-sufficiency, we could hope to save the finest elements in human life, for which libraries stand, from profanity and loss. But it will be necessary to gain a clearer idea of the intrinsic value of these elements, and to free library thought from the influence of collective sociologists. There

is a danger to the freedom of librarianship in the widespread acceptance of this type of sociology with its corollaries of citizen-worship, group-mindedness and pragmatism. It has its philosophical basis in the teaching of John Dewey. The definition of personality offered by the American sociologist F. V. Ballard, whose views are approved by many librarians, shows how formidable the obstacles are : it is, he says, 'the sum of the individual's habitual reactions as determined by the various roles and status accorded him by the groups of which he is a member'.<sup>18</sup> Habitual reactions do not add up to make a 'sum' in the arithmetical sense since they often conflict, despite the most careful conditioning ; the over-all picture of these reactions rather resembles a physical resultant of forces pulling this way and that, than a sum ; this mechanical conception of forces is quite unlike personality ; nor is personality 'determined' for the individual by society.

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## CHAPTER FOUR

### LIBRARIANSHIP AND SCIENCE

IN its broader sense science is any branch of knowledge ; in a narrower and commoner sense the term science is restricted to the natural sciences, and when a study is called scientific this is often understood to imply that the methods it follows have something in common with those of the natural sciences. Librarianship needs many more natural scientists in order to widen a professional outlook which has hitherto largely been confined to the dilettantism of what is conventionally admitted as ' literature ' in the English language, or to sociological studies. Until the time of Galileo the library was regarded as the only source of knowledge, but after his discovery that knowledge was also to be had from the natural world outside, there came a changed situation to which libraries are still struggling to adapt themselves—it became necessary for libraries to keep abreast of natural knowledge, instead of knowledge keeping abreast of libraries. Science is thus a good cure for authoritative librarianship.

Although an increase in scientific knowledge would enable the intellectual content of librarianship to be more broadly based than it is now, and would enable libraries to serve scientists and technicians more intelligently than they do, the method of adding new knowledges piece-meal will not help the librarian to achieve a whole view of the various possible intellectual objects and of the ways of approaching them. For the method only completes a catalogue or inventory of the librarian's mental equipment, and supplies no critique of the relations between the parts of knowledge. The study which gives the whole view is not one more knowledge, but a comparative study of the kinds of questions put and answered in the knowledges, and of the validity of the methods adopted in dealing with these questions. This enquiry is of a philosophical nature, and is able to consider the value of the other studies in a detached way. By supplying a regulative principle it prevents the balance of studies from plunging suddenly down on one side and up on the other when some branch of research, setting itself up as a solution to all problems, overweights

one side of the scales, or when the too hasty removal of another makes the other side too light.

The narrowly scientific attitude, while it is a necessary element in the approach to a synoptic view of human problems as a whole, and is especially necessary in fields, such as librarianship, which have too little of it, brings with it its own peculiar scale of values. Scientific criteria tend to be regarded by scientists as the only criteria. They are also easily understood by the layman, who is already impressed by the powers of science, especially by its destructive powers, and has perhaps read or been taught enough science to give him a feeling for the rigid mechanism of natural causation. Science finds this assumption completely sufficient, as it never poses problems that would need to be tackled on any other assumption, or when it does it refuses to recognise that they are of this nature. For there is no kind of human endeavour that is not capable of being regarded scientifically, however much its real character may thereby be distorted.

The question has often been asked whether librarianship should be regarded as an art or a science. It is an art. It is also a science in the broader sense, but not in the narrower sense : not, that is, similar in character or methods to the natural sciences. But it shares with many other spheres of human interest a vulnerability to the impersonalism of the natural sciences ; this, when introduced into those spheres, becomes a dehumanising influence. The scientific attitude seems likely to invade librarianship on two fronts—determinism and efficiency.

These two Western conceptions threaten to engulf the whole world. Indeed in librarianship one determinist attack comes from a quarter whence it might have been least expected—from the mystical East. Its strategist is the Indian librarian Ranganathan, whose writings furnish another proof, if any were needed, of the headway which the Western destruction of values is making against the spiritual heritage of India. He is concerned to demonstrate that library classification is a science, and a quotation will show whether science is here to be understood as a department of enquiry (the broad sense), or as implying a chain of causality linking inevitably determined occurrences (the narrow sense). In fact library classification, like most areas of librarianship, resembles an art in that it requires sensitive feeling for the relations of studies (which is similar to the artist's feeling for composition and form), a gift of seeing interconnections, and an artistic perception of unity and system. But it is a science in the

sense that it must keep such visions under the control of reason and verification ; it depends for its reliability on knowledge, and calls for some research. These ideas are not absent from the writings of Ranganathan but are inconsistent with his theory of classification as a science in the narrow sense, conveyed in the following quotation, which is expressed in the language of scientific determinism : ' A classificatory language is invariable, and translation into it is therefore a steady one-way process which can have only one conventionally perfect result. Not only is the result formally pre-determined, but the process also is governed by the fact that one pole is fixed ; the whole operation is canalised in the translator's mind by his knowledge of the fixed form, which therefore operates like a magnetic field. The effect of the scheme of classification in the determination of the specific subject may be visualised in another way. A thin plate of metal . . . is mounted in a horizontal position . . . A small amount of sand is sprinkled over the plate ; and a violin bow is used to set the plate singing. . . . The sand dances about and is soon thrown from the vibrating parts of the plate and collects at the nodal lines. . . . The pattern is determined by the vibrating qualities peculiar to the plate. So also the Phase-and Facet-Analysis peculiar to the classificatory language will throw the name of the specific subject of a book into a distinct form'.<sup>1</sup> The claim of inevitable scientific mechanism to extend to a sphere which is essentially the realm of interest, judgement and choice might have met with a stiffer resistance in the Indian mind. Instead one reads that classification is ' apprehension mechanised '<sup>2</sup> and that ' every translator (classifier) who uses the means provided will arrive at *the same result* (class number) : translation has been made a science '.<sup>3</sup> The procedure does not always work out perfectly in practice, and it is necessary to allow the existence of some ' indeterminateness '.<sup>4</sup> But the ideal is clear : for Ranganathan the process of classifying is like turning out a jelly from the mould he has invented ; and one may suppose that only technical difficulties, which can always be surmounted, lie in the way of turning out standardised library minds. Library electricity and magnetism are not only found in India but also in America. J. Powell explains that ' If a closed circuit of people moves through the magnetic field of a powerful book, it induces a current of thinking whose potential is proportional to the power of the book . . . Such a closed circuit of people is called a Group '.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps this is why thinking travels in vicious circles.

Much progress has been made in the technique of setting in motion inevitable processes which necessitate every worker not only reaching 'the same result', but at the same time of day, in the same department of a uniform kind of library, under the eye of a scrupulously standardised scientific management. This is a great advance, and is a wonderful piece of machinery. The greatness of the movement is revealed by the fact that it throws off a new language as a mere by-product. Cataloguing is analysed into 'therbligs'.<sup>5</sup> The final state produced, the ultimate purpose, is the state of Efficiency. It is the state in which the enquirer obtains what he wants, or rather what he is going to get, as from a machine which is set in motion by a ticket with a clock face stamped on it to show the time of day. He may be mildly surprised at what comes from the machine, but at least he is not kept waiting. Efficiency is the end ; the means are several, but Correctness is one of the chief. This rule of life is widespread in librarianship, and leads to a safety similar to that of the man who dresses correctly or is concerned that his use of words should be correct by dictionary standards. The appeal to the dictionary, often resulting in a triumphant confirmation, reinforces the idea that conformity to convention is a criterion of value, and language, instead of being our instrument, becomes an authority over us ; which is an instance of man's universal tendency to abdicate—a tendency revealed also in the centralisation which he sets over himself so as to absolve himself from intellectual decision. It is so much easier to transfer responsibility to a dictionary, the manual of the crowd, than to discover and explain one's own meaning, and to ensure that it is consistent with the other meanings with which it is brought into connection. But just as the dictionary definitions of terms may be closely followed without producing either internal consistency in the statements constructed from the terms or accuracy of reference to external fact, so correctness as a professional creed can be closely observed without reflecting any real conception of professional purpose. Correctness legislates ; philosophy enquires. But in a world dominated by purely 'scientific' notions, correctness of observation tends to usurp the supreme place which belongs to the ultimate purpose of action. Natural science cannot determine what this is, and in so far as a few natural scientists try to do so they act as philosophers. And it is good that more of them should, and thus come to question the ultimate value of correct observation of the changes undergone by human beings in gas or pressure chambers.

Besterman remarks that 'the library schools turn out many librarians who can catalogue competently, but very few who know what they are doing and why'.<sup>6</sup> If they catalogue competently, what does it matter, anyone may ask, whether they know what they are doing and why? To the employer of labour it matters nothing. Competence here means, more than anything else, correctness, and no cataloguing will be more correct after the cataloguer has acquired a knowledge of the purpose of what he does, if it was already correct before. It might become less correct, for correctness is conformity to a rule, and once he has begun to question the purpose of the rule he is not likely to stop there, but will go on to question whether the procedure enjoined by the rule is the one best calculated to achieve the purpose for which the rule exists. If he decides in favour both of the purpose and of the means to it, the displacement of his attention while he decided, or the repression involved in deferring a decision, will have marred the faultless integration of professional hand with professional eye, and seriously impaired the rhythm of library production. But if he is so wayward as to feel unsatisfied about aims or methods, his mind is likely to wander from the task in hand. There will be a psychologist on the premises to deal with such cases. Family history will have to be gone into. But not for long will families such as this persist, since the most efficient cataloguer will be the one whose mind is only burdened with the rules, and not with the reasons for the rules as well; there will be plenty of such cataloguers, since the work is so easy, and from these the future race will be bred, others being eliminated in the normal course of natural selection, until the world is populated by two sorts, the ciphers and the recorders of ciphers.

But although it does not matter to the scientific manager as such, it may matter enormously to the cataloguer, whether he works with knowledge of reasons. For he may hold peculiar opinions about the dignity of human labour, and may desire that his pursuits should have upon himself an educating effect similar to that which he hopes to produce by them in the world at large. To perform work with a purpose is self-educating, and efficiency should be regarded as a means to a further purpose, not as an end.

One type of librarian is extremely efficient—the Man who is Always Too Busy. He does not fuss in the spasmodic manner characteristic of fussy women, but organises fuss. Thus he converts fuss into a religion—a sign of the dangerous fanatic. He must not be approached for his opinion on a question of interpretation, for he is

engaged on essential work, and there's but to do or die. If you ask him for an opinion he will give you a ruling, following it up, if he can, with an injunction to carry it out. For he is far too good to have opinions. Questions that do not lie on his main drive are trivial side issues, and while others may fritter away their time in the indulgence of idle curiosity, he cannot afford to do so. By constant repression of the impulse to consider he becomes incapable of having any considered opinion. But he has beliefs, which are too strong to be expressed in the form of opinions. And he has the chance of gaining power, which he will use to ensure, as far as he can, that the minds of those he controls are as empty as a scientifically exhausted vacuum.

No profession can do without rules, and when rules are to be followed there is no better concept for indicating how this is to be done than the concept of scientific precision, regardless of persons. The man who is a danger to the freedom of his kind is not the one who follows rules, but he who earns his sustenance by the automatic carrying out of rules and instructions, and never thinks another thought. No librarian should be paid enough to support life in return for work involving nothing but the translation of rules into practice, and work of this kind should not be allowed to exceed a half of any day. Not only is the uniformity of such work detrimental to the performer, but the willingness of the majority to undertake it deprives the more thoughtful person of the opportunity to escape from it, and reduces all to a lower level. Society wishes to force the scholar to carry out 'practical' work, however degrading, but does not force the 'practical' man to attempt intellectual work which would strain his capacity.

Perhaps the profession of librarianship is more burdened with rules than any except law and the church. In cataloguing the existence of rules (though not always of the rules that do exist) while justified, imposes on the librarian a duty more arduous than the observance and interpretation of rules, namely the task of seeing that they produce the most helpful result, and of changing them if they do not. It is a curious fact that rules, which are always ostensibly devised for the benefit of some person or persons, usually operate to their disadvantage, and not only in librarianship. Most of us who encounter rules that have been made for us by beneficent rulers either find these rules superfluous—and there is nothing more irksome than to be told to do what we intend to do—or positively obstructive. The rules for entry of illustrations have successfully obscured the charac-

ter of fine books for more than one decade. In classification the rules take on the formidable guise of 'canons.' This term is borrowed from ecclesiastical law, a fact which sufficiently indicates the authoritarianism implied. They are introduced into a sphere where dogma is more impractical and ridiculous than dangerous. Ranganathan, the reading of whose works reduces to picking out the words of wisdom from a maze of rules states 'If the classifier guides himself by the Canons of Context and Enumeration he cannot go wrong.' As if classification can be right. He thinks it can, and that there is a correct place for a subject, this being indicated by the unerring pointers of scientific determinism. The time may come when persons habituated to the following of instructions will form tractable instruments for the fulfilment of purposes of which, if they had not lost the power of thought, they would disapprove. Tyranny operates by instructions and feeds on those who like to follow them.

The man who desires that the obedient should carry out his will strengthens in them the disposition to obey by means of a simple stratagem. He appeals to their sense of honour, or to the unwritten rules of the profession, the social circle, or 'the people.' The victim is not sure what honour is, except that it is somehow connected with loyalty, but feeling that he should not betray any doubt about the true nature of such important things as honour (a doubt which philosophy would have caused him rather to prize than to be ashamed of) he thinks it best to obey promptly, in case the other should be right and make a fool of him. The fool is as much a fool in the eyes of the world if only *he* is right, hence it is so much more important to avoid appearing a fool than to avoid being one. It is thus fairly easy to cause a very large number of people to hold the same view of what honour is, and the larger the number of those who hold it the easier it is to make a still larger number hold the same view. Honour thus occupies the same powerful position as the unwritten rules. No one knows what honour is, nor what the unwritten rules are, but everyone regards them with reverence, and these vague deities are clung to tenaciously by people who have nothing else. The task of promoting freedom of thought in such conditions is made formidable by the difficulty of reasoning with those who make their appeal to unwritten laws, which are inaccessible.

The right to think independently is every man's, but is in danger of

desuetude ; its exercise, which is more vital in librarianship than elsewhere, is incompatible with whole-time routine efficiency and with the educational methods which lead up to it : one of these is to have students take down notes word for word by dictation, and if a student voices his opinion that what he is asked to write is not true his objection is waived, since the work must go on, the sooner it is over the better, and even the comprehension of the falsehoods is already making a heavy demand on the supply of intelligence. Human ills, including efficiency, are largely caused by the unwillingness of men to see the human personality as a whole ; their division of it into isolated compartments takes many forms, for all of which science is not to blame. But the scientific attitude is the most typical and dangerous form of psychic specialisation, and will be found to underlie many of the others. The attitude is due not to science but to those who think the natural sciences are the only science, and who are unable to give free scope to the spirit of enquiry in other fields.

There is a movement today towards scientific objectivity, which has almost taken possession of librarianship. Some watchfulness is necessary lest library science (to use the American term) should come to resemble science in the narrow, not in the broad sense. This may happen if librarianship is regarded as 'field work' to be 'explored' by teams of investigators in 'special field courses', since all this is the jargon of the natural sciences. That the danger is not unreal is apparent from the assumptions of the movement. The theory is that when the human being and the library are brought into relation things happen, just as things happen when two substances capable of chemical interaction are brought together. As chemical science arranges experiments in the laboratory to find out what happens in chemical change, so library science arranges experiments in the sociological 'field' to find out what happens in library use. Librarianship is regarded as being presented to us like a slice of the natural world. Things are going on there, and we have only to get our research tools to work on it to find out exactly what is going on. The method is to discover what happens in all the isolated bits of library use, and then to piece all these together in a graph or to construct a formula out of them. The final verdict as to what is going on in librarianship often strikingly confirms the timid opinion of anyone who knew it was occurring in some places and would not have been surprised to find that it was occurring

in others. But now, thanks to scientific method, he knows ; and he might have been wrong.

Most men desire power, and pursue science not disinterestedly, but for the power it gives over the external world. Science restricts itself to the investigation of causal mechanism because this intellectual method subserves the desire to set in motion ourselves the causes we have discovered, and thus to produce changes in passive or stubborn material. Few of us prefer thinking to acting, and most of us prefer our activity in producing changes to be unimpeded by thought ; we know that the transformed appearance of the world is satisfactory evidence that things are getting done, and we enquire no further, unless enquiry can bring about a useful result, such as the downfall of some human obstacle to the exercise of force. Since professional librarianship is little concerned with effecting forceful change in physical material, but must provide an outlet for power impulses if it is to attract energetic men, it is exposed to the temptation of enlisting the help of science so as to effect changes in human minds, which is a dangerous technique. The risks of a librarianship devoted to science but divorced from philosophy are obvious.

In scientific observation the observer has a personal equation, which enables him to discount the errors which creep into his experiments on account of his individual peculiarities. This procedure is proper in scientific work, which is based on the assumptions of the uniformity of nature and the invariant mechanism of causality. These are regarded as independent of persons. But the procedure would be out of place in other fields where no such inevitable causality is operative. There are many fields of interpretation, of which librarianship is one, in which it is not operative.

No one can seriously question the fundamental rightness of the aim to discover non-personal truth : but although it may be desirable to eliminate the personal, it is never possible to eliminate altogether the subjective element in the relation of the mind to its object. The philosophical theory of perception, which the majority of scientists ignore, makes abundantly clear the difficulty of determining exactly how much objectivity the supposed scientific object can have. But the scientist continues to assume that in 'scientific detachment' he not only removes personal feeling but eliminates himself from the picture altogether. Any who pretend that the subjective element in knowledge can be abolished, and

accordingly try to abolish it, kill opinion in the process. This has unfortunate consequences for the freedom of thought. 'Scientific research' prefers to express its truth in the 'impersonal' form of graphs, statistics, measurements, tests and figures; its results are described as 'findings,' as if they were diamonds rather than opinions, and reason is expected to defer to the reports in which these findings are enshrined. All this threatens to produce a progressive elimination of the expression of opinion. If opinion comes out it is condemned merely because it is opinion. But if opinions and hypotheses cannot be effectively killed they should be allowed to live, otherwise the speculative intellect itself will die. If this were to die no subjects for 'research' could be suggested, since the fact that a given objective statistical investigation is thought *worth* undertaking cannot itself be the result of a previous objective statistical investigation, and that of another, and so *ad infinitum*.

Scientific detachment, or to call it by its truer name, since it is not the monopoly of scientists, detachment, is perhaps one of the noblest intellectual virtues. But it should not be claimed with special pride by natural scientists, since their enquiries are already detached. The detachment they prize is not evidence of an ability to eliminate personal feeling from a region where personal feeling runs riot. Their detachment is no more than a sign that personal feeling is already absent. It is the detachment of the Himalayan pinnacle or the slimy bed of the Pacific. Thus it is not so much detachment as remoteness. It is rather the remoteness of the enquiry from humanity than the detachment of the scientist from feeling. Or so it would be at least, if the scientific mind were all that is claimed for it. But in fact an *opinion* about the slimy bed of the Pacific mediates (or shall we say intrudes?) between that slimy bed and the scientist. The danger lies not so much in believing in the desirability of detachment, for about this there can hardly be a doubt, but in proclaiming that it has already been achieved. If it had been achieved, opinion could thenceforth with justification be held in contempt. Opinion would be the inferior state of mind of one who had failed to avail himself of the newest gift of science—scientific detachment. So uncouth an enquirer would be no fit companion for those who claim knowledge, not opinion, of the slimy bed of the Pacific. Difficulties arise when they are asked what it is that is at the bottom of the Pacific. They all agree in being detached, but they do not all agree about what it is that is detached from them. The

difficulties are not only difficulties of observation; the same problems arise in regard to things near at hand. If there were libraries at the bottom of the Pacific, scientific detachment would demand knowledge of the librarianship there, and not personal opinion about it. But no one would be able to utter any absolutely non-personal truths about it. And the situation is not changed if the libraries are in Chicago and the scientists are in the school of library science there, except that the latter scientists have better opportunities for forming personal opinions.

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## CHAPTER FIVE

### TOLERANCE AND IMPARTIALITY

MUCH has been said and written about freedom from fear. Among fears the fear of failure is one of the most paralysing, and anyone who contributed to its removal would deserve the gratitude of mankind. The fear of intellectual failure, in particular, saps the courage of students and thinkers, and prevents the expression of valuable ideas which are heretical or unpopular. Thus thought is prevented from being fluid, and originality is stifled. Men are deterred from gazing fearlessly at the truth by considerations of safety. What is the remedy for fear of this kind of failure? The best remedy is within the power of each man, and lies in indifference to success in the sense in which that term is understood by the majority. But society could help the individual considerably. An improvement would result if the expression of opinion were valued for its own sake. Librarians can be effective in promoting a higher valuation of opinion, and a new appreciation of the courage required to express it, if they are themselves convinced of its value. To value an opinion which, while not demonstrably false, appears to be so, which arouses dislike, or which cannot be shown to be useful, requires tolerance. All opinion is objectionable to some, therefore tolerance relates to all opinion.

Perhaps the worst enemy of tolerance is the feeling of insecurity. But a state of insecurity is to a large extent brought about by initial intolerance. Insecurity increases intolerance, and the increased intolerance further increases the insecurity. Another formidable enemy is ignorance, which libraries seek to remove by the spread of knowledge pleasant and unpleasant, approved and disapproved, useful and useless. The greater the ignorance the greater the intolerance, since tolerance is automatically helped in proportion as the desire arises to remove ignorance concerning an opposite point of view to one's own. Active intelligence, which is necessary for this, cannot come into play until the initial heat of intolerance has died down, and while there may not yet be tolerance, an absence of intolerance is

beginning to exist when intelligence begins to work. Ignorance more often results from lack of desire for this understanding than from lack of opportunity for it : many have no interest in ideas or opinions, and do not care whether they are true or false ; this gives rise to a spurious form of tolerance which is equivalent to a shrug of the shoulders. But the intolerant societies and social groups with which we are familiar do much to deprive the individual of the opportunity to exercise true tolerance, and in three ways : first, they deprive him of the sense of personal responsibility and of the actual jurisdiction which must be his before there can be any question of his showing tolerance in his own right and on his own initiative ; second, they undermine by subtle methods his sovereignty over his own character, so that the power imperceptibly passes from him of building that character on tolerant or on any other lines ; third, they place obstacles in the way of his access to the literature necessary for the formation of his judgement, or neglect to remove obstacles which only they have the power to remove. The literature in question has often not been printed ; when it has it is always little known. Well-known literature tends towards intolerance, gives voice to unexamined assumptions, or affords to those who have not succeeded in acquiring enough power to persecute in life the thrill of seeing it done in print. These motives work almost entirely unconsciously, and are not incompatible with expressions of horror at their overt manifestation in others. Libraries should regard their duty not merely as the distribution of opinion in literary form, but as a contribution towards that free state of society in which unpopular publication is not interfered with. As regards already existing literature, that which is hidden, hard to trace, and hard to secure by unaided effort is the literature which it is most worth while to make available on request. The librarians who at present refuse to be beaten by requests for recondite material, however senseless the requests may seem to be, are additionally justified by the fact that the requests are not really senseless.

What has been said of ignorance should apply also to the librarian, for an ignorant librarian is an unintentional censor. But he should not make the library an expression of his own opinions, except indeed that it will express his opinion that all opinions should be expressed, nor of the opinion of any administrative body that seeks to control him. His aim should be to create the conditions, in respect of atmosphere and the supply of literature and the keys to it, in which others

can form their opinions. He should try not only to give scope to views which are avowedly views, but also to those assertions which pretend to be something else, such as alleged truths and dogmas ; decisions and laws, which relate only to action and not to knowledge, have the right to enter the library as illustrating the point of view which underlies them, but not on any official ground. An opinion does not cease to be an opinion if a large number of persons hold it, whether they are persons with temporal authority and therefore in a position to enforce it, or persons with academic authority and therefore in a position to dissuade anyone from attempting to controvert it, or persons with no stronger authority than that of numbers, and only able to laugh at opinions which differ from it. Even if everyone held a view, it would still be an opinion. There can be no views that are not, in at least one sense of the word personal, personal views, since without persons there could be no views. The man who remembers that dogmas are views, that views are personal views, and that persons are fallible, is sceptical of the opinions of others and modest in his own ; such men are not easily made slaves. Nevertheless, if he thinks there are more adequate grounds for considering his own beliefs to be true than for regarding as true those of others, he incurs thereby the obligation, in a free society, not indeed to do the others the over-zealous kindness of trying to convert them, but to express himself. His ideas should then be made available by libraries impartially.

The injunction to set aside personal views generally refers to all such views except those of the nation, social or professional body, or other authority, whose self-appointed representative the enjoiner is, and with the particular exception of his own rendering thereof. A realisation of this divests oracles of their aura of dignity, and enables their pronouncements to be examined as personal views and weighed against one's own and other such. This having been done, all that remains is to choose, not the one that is true, for probably none of them is that, but the least false. But as things are, this freedom of choice is apt to be interfered with by previous administrative decisions which cannot be reversed. As practical decisions can acquire the immovable bulk of the snowball that has rolled downhill to a standstill, it is important that the first decision should be one that is not likely to meet with subsequent discomfiture. The opinion that is least likely to be upset by what happens is the one that is true, the truth being the cause not the effect. First decisions should therefore be made by students of truth.

Intolerance of opinion often comes from the side of scientific determinism. The interests of science are supposed to be beyond opinion, and this enables the scientists to be intolerant of all views except their own, which are not cast in the form of opinion but in that of statistics, team tests and objective probes. Escape from the personal is here more imaginary than real. The idea is that statistics are nothing to be ashamed of : they are in the pure line of research, whereas opinions are stray mongrels to be apologised for if they cannot be turned out of doors. With the opinions is rejected the possibility of extracting from them a fragment of truth. For the truth is accessible to them as it is to the scientifically disinfected survey, though not in so pasteurised a form. It is no coincidence that these surveys work in close alliance with the most intolerant of all forms of expression—public opinion. The survey, which is at least as common in librarianship as elsewhere, aims at the discovery of public opinion, and the larger the number of the same opinions, the stronger and more impressive the final result is supposed to be. In fact private opinion is more worth discovering than public opinion, and the free world which libraries should aim to bring about is not one in which there would be free expression of public opinion, for this can always be freely, even truculently expressed, but one in which private opinion could be freely expressed and communicated. This has to exist before it can be communicated, and at present there is not much of it. It can also be prevented from existing by being denied expression, for most men find it a strain to hold opinions that no one knows about. Hence the superior courage necessary to belong to a resistance movement. But even in a resistance movement there is comradeship, whereas the individual whose opinion is unique, and probably uniquely valuable, will, if he cannot express it, come to have as little interest in it as in his laid up car. Both will decay for lack of maintenance.

If all ideas were uniform, there could be no conflict. Uniformity would make tolerance unnecessary. And in an ideal state of society all would agree not only in their opinion that justice ought to be put into practice, but in the opinion each held as to the part which he himself and all the rest ought severally to play in the common life. Those whose work was the pursuit of knowledge might perhaps have reached a state of absorption in truth, so that there would be nothing left for them to do but contemplate in perfect unanimity the truth which all had reached. But on this earth diversity makes life

worth living. Whatever opinion may be held about the desirability of diversity, there cannot be two opinions about its inevitability, for thinking beings at least. For when it is impossible to attain certainty, disagreement follows. So inevitable is difference of opinion, that unanimity should be regarded with immediate suspicion as being 'inspired' not in the noble but in the debased currency of that word. Hence the futility of supposing that world peace and unity would ensue upon the creation of 'uniformity of moral climate,' 'homogeneity of accepted standards' and other excuses for intolerance. The task of libraries is to combat these by making diversity of view as conspicuous as possible. The ideal which Ballard sets before us is false. He states that the library should develop the 'social homogeneity' which results from the 'inculcation of a set of common ideas.'<sup>7</sup> This is an evil which is reinforced by many powerful social forces, in the battle against which the library will need its whole fund of broad-mindedness. Comte says 'tant que les intelligences individuelles n'auront pas adhéré par un assentiment unanime à un certain nombre d'idées générales capables de former une doctrine sociale commune, on ne peut se dissimuler que l'état des nations restera, de toute nécessité, essentiellement révolutionnaire, malgré tous les palliatifs politiques qui pourront être adoptés.'<sup>1</sup> This problem always presses urgently upon mankind, but the solution of it lies rather in the ability to tolerate a different view than in the requirement that all views should be the same. If it be objected that it is inconsistent to demand that the view that contrary opinion should be tolerated should be held universally, since the result would be that every view would be tolerated except the view that difference of opinion should not be tolerated, the answer is that toleration implies toleration even of the opinion that there should be no toleration. Intolerant *action* is another matter, and there is not the same necessity to tolerate it.

For it is only *opinion* that should be tolerated. Hence the objections sometimes raised that the slums, or gross incompetence, or whatever it may be, should not be tolerated, are beside the point. If someone believes he can make out a case for the retention of the slums, or for the virtues of incompetence, it is our duty as librarians to allow his views to obtain a hearing. The reason why he should be heard is because no one knows the whole truth, and his opinions may have something of value in them. Any opinion stands the chance of being partly right. But the duty to avoid the suppression

of an opinion about the slums implies no obligation to tolerate the slums. It suffices to tolerate opinions about them. Nor are we called upon as librarians either to tolerate or not to tolerate slums. For while as electors we may hold opinions about the slums which cause us to cast a vote in one direction or another, we have no such political obligations as librarians. It is not in our capacity as librarians that we vote. A librarian can have no political obligations, and he might prejudice freedom of thought if he were to be associated with a political programme.

All men, but particularly intolerant men, tend to form groups, and group formation is certainly action, not opinion. Its ostensible purpose may be the interchange of ideas, but the quality of the group experience is often intemperate and emotional, even hysterical, and appeals to the racial man, instead of the thinking individual. The former is in a majority and will persecute the latter. There seems to be no duty to tolerate these groups. But it is as difficult as it is important to learn to recognise them and thus to avoid injustice to other groups. Undesirable groups disappear most effectively not when they are suppressed, but when each individual abstains from belonging to them. This he does if he has what he wants, or else is able to judge critically the statements of those who arouse in him desires which can only be satisfied by irrational procedure.

How can we say that there cannot be two opinions about the fact that there must be more than one opinion? and how be certain that certainty is impossible? We must suppose that some facts can be known indubitably, and it is these that are the subjects of the single opinion and the certainty. Let  $x$  be a disputed matter, and  $y_1$ ,  $y_2$ ,  $y_3$ , etc. be known to be opinions about it. Then the statement ' $y_1$ ,  $y_2$ ,  $y_3$  etc. are known to exist' is true; and it is about the truth of this statement, and not about  $x$ , that there can be but one opinion.

It is sometimes said that a library should be impartial. Impartiality is not the state of mind of a man who holds no opinions, but that of the man who, in arriving at his opinions, does so with reference to nothing else than the truth as he understands it. Since then impartiality is a state of mind, it cannot properly belong to an institution, such as a library, which has no mind. Hence it is a characteristic of the librarians who operate the library, and all of these may hold different opinions and yet all be impartial. Their impartiality belongs to them as possessors of minds, and is a quality of their judgment. None of them can therefore be impartial unless

he enjoys perfect freedom and autonomy of individual judgment. Not only this, but his judgment must be perfectly informed. No relevant fact, probability or consideration must escape him if he is to be impartial, for he cannot decide impartially between alternatives of which he is not fully aware. Impartiality is therefore rather a quality of a divine being, than of a librarian. Nevertheless it represents an ideal to be striven for by diligent research, vigour of independent thought, and awareness of possibilities. Impartiality is essentially an attribute of personal judgment. Hence the error of describing the library as McColvin has described it, as the impartial instrument of a purposive society.<sup>2</sup> No impartial individual could consent to be the instrument of society. Nor can an instrument be impartial: the hammer cannot decide impartially whether the nail shall be hit. Scientific instruments are sometimes described as impartial: they cannot lie. Nor can they distinguish the lie from the truth. They are neither impartial nor partial but are simply acted upon by forces that determine them.

The matter has importance, because it is as instruments that society would like to regard its individuals. In the modern world society has a will of its own, which it is the duty of its members, as instruments, to carry out. This duty which they have, as instruments, to the nation-state, whose chattels they are, precludes their having duties to the members of other nation-states as to human beings. For these other individuals are not human beings any more than they themselves, but are the respective chattels of the respective nation-states. The aim, then, of all the chattels of all the nation-states is by propaganda or physical force or any means (for all means are justified in relation to the supreme end, which is the supreme state) to make the other instruments, instruments of their own state, instead of being instruments of those other states.

L. Martin offers a definition of the library alternative to McColvin's. The library is the 'Agency of a political system founded upon the assumption that enlightened men are able to govern themselves.'<sup>3</sup> This is almost as unsatisfactory. An agent may be a moral agent; but that is not the sense here. An agent here is one who acts instrumentally on behalf of another. The library, as an institution of learning, cannot in this sense be the agent of a political system, however good that system may be, any more than it can be the instrument of a society. No political system has been devised that would enable men to govern themselves: democracy is the govern-

ment of each by the rest. The definition also suggests that men are enlightened now, but the present is rather an occasion for lamentation than for assumption on this point.

The philosophy which would best support the conception of the librarian as an instrument is pragmatism. For pragmatism all thought is instrumental, and those beliefs are true that are useful. The creed has a wide appeal and is reflected in such every-day sayings as 'true for all practical purposes.' When the practical purposes are those of a dominant society, the librarian and his thought are, on this view, instrumental in the furthering of society's purposes. This is a valueless philosophy for librarianship, which must protect views not considered socially useful, and instead of regarding the endeavour to reach truth as instrumental to practical ends, must insist that the practical ends to be achieved in social life are for individual freedom, in which the freedom to pursue facts to their hiding places is so important an element. But pragmatism is a good philosophy for oppressors, who always make their appeal to what is useful in the state's or the people's interest, determining at the same time that nothing will be permitted to prove useful except what furthers their plans. Thus the pragmatist philosophy will favour the free expression of opinion if and only if the opinion is officially described as useful to society. No question of impartiality or tolerance arises for this philosophy, since all useful views are true and approved, and those not useful are simply false and condemned. But the librarian must hearten and strengthen the side that is faring badly in disputes where public opinion becomes dictatorial; he will thus serve the cause of impartiality in an indirect way by holding the balance between opposing forces; for among his readers there will be few minds so well able as he to embrace the whole view of a hotly contested matter. They will mostly incline to one side or the other. Impartiality can be achieved by a powerful backing of the losing side. At the same time the librarian will use his independence of judgment so as to form an opinion on the comparative truth of beliefs and views; those that are apparently deservedly worsted can be left to die a natural death in the interest of economy. The latter factor, and the tyranny of demand for inferior literature will modify in certain respects the librarian's practice but not his opinions or beliefs, which are the subject matter of philosophy. If ideas are good, practice can be good given the material resources; without good ideas there can be no good practice whatever the resources.

R. A. Ulveling states 'Very wisely, public libraries have never advocated any specific doctrine, system or practice. The only point on which a positive position is taken is in upholding the generally recognised moral law.'<sup>5</sup> There being no generally recognised moral law the statement must refer to some moral law recognised by a majority of Americans. If public libraries are to uphold this, it is essential that it should first be carefully and explicitly defined. He continues 'On controversial issues, where legitimate differences of opinion exist they remain neutral.' All differences of opinion are legitimate. Not all opinions are equally true. Is the librarian to be content to be neutral with regard to truth? The mere presentation of points of view indicates the dangerous indifferentism of today, in which the mind is no better than a clouded mirror; a brainless public feels the absurdity of trying to hold beliefs when learned men are all at variance, many of them asserting that there are no standards except in science. One has to confess that public libraries are to some extent responsible for transforming the daylight of knowledge into the neutral twilight in which all cows are black. Libraries create one of the major problems of our society, for they develop immense efficiency in the diffusion and communication of ideas, without engendering any corresponding increase in the power to discriminate and to think fundamentally. Science has made the former *easy*, but can do little to promote the latter, which does not depend on an increase in *ease* of performance. The library as an institution cannot do much to remedy the situation it creates: salvation never comes from institutions, but from individual integrity, personal effort, and the determination to let no institutions dominate the personality. Concentration of thought, enabling manifold problems to be considered together in the light of a single principle, is more needed today than the diffusion of knowledge by libraries, in which single problems are considered from manifold viewpoints.

The idea of impartiality is better than that of neutrality. Impartiality is active neutrality. So long as decisions have to be made in intellectual matters neutrality cannot be preserved, for it is the static, inactive role of the non-participant. Ulveling would agree that librarians cannot stand outside the thinking world: if then they enter it they must bring with them impartiality of judgment. Book selection and classification as library activities are impossible without judgment, though they are in fact carried on without it on many occasions, being thus performed with neutrality, which is the

absence of judgment. It is not merely that the *word* impartiality is better than the word neutrality ; the difference is in what is meant by the word.

Impartiality does not preclude taking sides. On the contrary it will often be necessary to take sides in the interest of impartiality. In contested intellectual questions the impartial person will favour the view that seems to him the most true : there is a difference between favour and favouritism. Sometimes others will take the same view as he, and a small minority will thus be formed. It will appear as if impartiality has been violated, because the thinker who was supposed to be impartial has joined one of the smaller of the rival camps. But the appearance is an illusion, for he would have been in that camp if he had been its sole occupant. The presence of the others is not the reason why he is there ; but if the same motives as his have led them there the camp will be a peaceful rather than a war-like one. The love of truth causes people to come together independently from the same motives. But some writers have unfortunately supposed that impartiality means indifference, neutrality, or *laissez faire*, and have accordingly condemned it.<sup>8</sup> They rightly condemn but wrongly suppose that they are condemning impartiality.

Among creative artists is often found a form of tolerance which implies the absence of belief. This tolerance is possible because there is no strongly held opinion. Rational thought is superseded by intuition, vision and mysticism. To artists rational enquiries rarely seem to matter greatly, and all forms of them can be tolerated. In much the same way forms of religious belief have now become more easily tolerable because their differences matter less than formerly. Although this tolerance reflects a generous mind it is not the tolerance necessary for freedom of thought. Tolerance of vehemently opposed opinion is needed. Neutrality is related to impartiality as the tolerance practised by the bohemian is related to that practised by the seeker of truth who respects the freedom of other seekers to hold the different opinions which they form for themselves.

There is an underlying rightness in the view that freedom of thought and speech should be tolerated so long as they do not prejudice the common interest, but the language thus used obliterates it. The form of expression is dangerous because so many people understand by common interest whatever the government tells them is in the common interest, so that common interest comes to be identified with official policy. The latter is a means not an end,

The truth in the view is that all men have indeed a real interest in common, and it lies in the freedom of each. It does not lie in the plans which they carry out in common. These are no more than instrumental measures. But they are, regrettably, easier to understand and more impressive to the average man than individual liberty. Most people are more easily swayed by vast projects of industrialisation or development and by immense schemes of social organisation than by the development of personality. They understand force and force is accordingly used upon them. But a philosophy of personality rests on the belief that a man's duty to pursue his good is not a consequence of the fact that others have this duty in common with him : it is common to all because it is the duty of each. Only in this sense is there a common interest, and it is clearly not a national interest or the interest of any other group. The common end is a private good.<sup>4</sup> Houle thinks that in libraries 'individuals are advised in terms . . . of . . . a basic conception of what is good for the community.'<sup>5</sup> It would be interesting to know whether this philosophy is prominently displayed in any library, and if so, how many enquirers it has deterred. The less stupid of them would rightly suspect that the library's theory of what was good for the community might not coincide with true and simple answers to their questions. Houle allows that 'Also, one needs to examine the present desires of the borrowers of the library in order to see what kinds of things seem real and important to them.' These things *are* real and important to the borrowers ; it is to Houle that they seem or do not seem so. His desire to help those who are not 'already motivated' is the generous wish that all should enjoy the benefit of a broader understanding. But it cannot be assumed that they are not already motivated ; psychology will not allow the possibility of this. The creation of motivation' which Houle advocates is really not a creation but an attempted substitution. He says that the 'creation of motivation' has been accepted by 'every other agency of education.' It has indeed, the result being that a few men have the power to make millions think in a predetermined way. There is no justification for instilling the false conception of an intolerant common interest.

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## CHAPTER SIX

### COOPERATION

EFFECTIVE cooperation is difficult if the groups of potential cooperators come under despotic control, since small-scale intolerance will not produce large-scale tolerance. When national governments become tyrannous towards their own individuals, treating them as means, it will be impossible for them to surrender power for the sake of 'foreign' individuals, and to treat them as ends. No real cooperation is possible unless individuals are treated as ends. But cooperation as generally understood is not always devised for the sake of the supreme end—the human personality. Sometimes cooperation and the individual change places in current conceptions, and instead of cooperation being the means or instrument, it is regarded as the end, man being the means or instrument for its realisation. This is the cooperation in which national governments aim to train their subjects, when they urge upon them cooperation in the 'national interest.' Public opinion is encouraged to call the cooperators good and the non-cooperators bad, with the intention of discrediting and ruining the latter. Disinterested discussion of what is meant by good; and of what cooperation ought to be for, is not encouraged. Cooperation degenerates into collaboration.

This is not an inevitable state of affairs. If libraries, for example, are freely represented in an enlightened central authority which acts for them in such a way as truly to carry out their wishes, such an authority can enter into arrangements on their behalf which will bring about genuine cooperation. But to create an enlightened central authority is not easy, since centralisation and enlightenment rarely go together. Centralisation produces efficiency and uniformity (more surely the latter than the former) rather than inspiration and enlightenment. But at least it is useful to be aware of the problems and to have some idea of the lines along which they may be tackled. Authorities should arise by consent. This does not merely mean that an authority can claim to be carrying out the wishes of those under its control. It means that the authority could

neither have been set up nor continue to exist without their expressed wish to that effect, and that the expressed wish corresponds with the real wish. Unless these conditions are realised, the main motive for cooperating is liable to become fear of the consequences of not cooperating. In cooperation there should be no sacrifice of conscience.

Cooperation in librarianship may usefully be discussed in relation to that form of it which is involved in the borrowing and lending of books. Many other forms are possible, but certain basic attitudes are essential to cooperation in general.

The view generally held has been expressed by Pafford, who states that the best potential cooperator is the librarian 'who performs best and keeps first in his mind his duty to his own readers ; and whose primary motive for cooperating is to help them.'<sup>1</sup> This philosophy is hardly adequate even in a world of plenty, and its deficiency is conspicuous in a world of scarcity where many want what all cannot have. Perfect plenty is never attained, if by this is meant, and it is hard to see what else could be meant by it, a state of perfect equilibrium between demand and supply. The best is always scarce : are we to scramble for it ? The view quoted is, in miniature, the nationalism that has always provided theoretical obstacles to a world view and practical obstacles to happiness. When the question arises of lending one's own possession it is in principle better to ask not 'Can I afford to lend this or will it be required by my own readers ?' but 'Can I afford not to lend this and to keep it for my own readers ?' Looking at the matter on a wide scale, if real civilisation is to come into existence, nations must become conscious not only of an obligation to spare a little from plentiful supplies for the sake of those who are less well provided, but actually to sacrifice for the sake of other nations. This will happen when the word nation disappears from the vocabulary, and relations between men are between individuals. Everything should now and always be done to bring such conditions nearer.

But the point of view quoted would, if followed to its logical conclusion, put an end to cooperation, for it would result in a non-cooperative attitude. The assumptions it makes probably arise, though perhaps not consciously, from the philosophy according to which the interests of society will automatically best be served if each person pursues his own interest. By pursuing his own happiness, he will promote the happiness of the greatest number, the utilitarians

thought. Such a theory of enlightened self-love will only work out to the intended result if every individual identifies his own good with the 'good of society.' This implies that there is a 'common good.' The phrase should be used with care. The good is common only in the sense that it is the good of each man individually. Pafford mentions 'such other essentials as that the cooperation must be to the general advantage.' But cooperation is not for the sake of any *general* advantage other than the true interest of every individual. It is in the true interest of man that he should act in such a way as to make it possible for other men to follow their true interest also; his duty thus arises purely and simply from the respect of man for man. Owing no allegiance to any 'common good' other than this, he owes no allegiance to any authority which would define the common good for him in another way, or would educate him in obedience to some other conception.

Libraries A and B both want the book C, both applications being for the same purpose, for the same length of time, and for workers equally scholarly. But the book happens to rest on the shelf of library A. Or nation A thinks the world library would be an adornment to its own territory, and so does nation B, there being nothing to choose between the two locations in point of suitability. In these examples, what is the true interest of the individuals represented by A? It is not that they should secure what they desire for themselves in successful competition against the individuals of B. These are occasions when the individuals of A can be true to themselves, and fulfil the best that is in them, by yielding to impulses of generosity. Thus they would remove the possibility that it was they who stood in the way of the spread of knowledge.

The librarian of A, and those on his side, may reflect that if they do not lend C to B they will have a poor chance of securing Y from B, and if they do not obtain Y for the important and powerful person X, the latter will not bequeath to them the so-and-so collection, and may work against the promotion of certain of them. These are extraneous considerations, and if they were allowed to motivate the action of A, that action would have the purpose of treating the individuals of B as means to the satisfaction of those of A, whereas individuals should be treated as ends, not as means.

Can there be a rule for cooperation? It cannot be a stereotyped rule such as that each should sacrifice for others, since this would cancel itself out, as it does when I and my aunt send each other

identical china dogs, or when a seat in an overcrowded bus remained empty in former days because no one would occupy it. But at least no particular harm has been done by this exchange of the dogs, as it might have been if we had tried to defraud each other of shares in a uranium mine. Although the fundamental principle cannot perhaps be expressed in a formal rule, the understanding of it will nevertheless enable situations to be dealt with in the right way. It is the principle which, in practical life, causes the restraint of the would-be borrower who refrains from asking for what he wants because he realises how important it is that the possessor should retain it. But if the philosophy of the above quotation were the true one it would be uncooperative to do this. It would indeed still be possible to realise that the holder of a book required it for his own readers, but this would be no occasion for respecting his desires. It would be a challenge to the prospective borrower to do what he could to outwit the other, and thus to secure the book for his own side. We all hope there would be more than enough books for everyone in the ideal conditions of world librarianship. But it would be foolish to blind ourselves to the possible disappointment, perhaps only temporary, of not having a particular supply to meet adequately an unusual demand. Such crucial cases are the test of a philosophy. If it survives them it is not likely to be unequal to providing a sound theoretical basis for the more ordinary circumstances. The philosophy of librarianship should be founded on the good life to be lived by every man, and the true interest of the individual is to contribute to bring this about for every man. The librarian will, it is true, cooperate so as to help his own readers : he will help them to achieve their individuality : but only they themselves can do this, by not thinking first of their own needs.

Nevertheless the view of Pafford cannot be rejected so easily. It is practical rather than philosophical, and is a suitable guide for a world in which it pays anyone to get what he can when he can. There is little trust between persons, especially persons of opposing national groups. Much literature is of the kind that gives the borrower power that could be used against the lender. Prospective lenders are aware that their self sacrifice would be paralleled by no such action on the part of the prospective borrowers if the positions were reversed. Borrowers are lazy and unintelligent, and do not deserve to benefit from the resourcefulness of lenders who have provided themselves with well selected literature. No adequate

system of compensation could safeguard the lenders of rare or valuable material. Nor can the lenders afford to alienate the support of financial magnates with isolationist tendencies. Books are commodities with value in exchange, and should only be lent with an eye to business : sacrifice should not be without effect on the balance of payments. And readers understand an appeal to narrow self-interest; they will appreciate the point of letting others borrow, if they themselves cannot otherwise have what they require.

Further, those individuals gain most power who most wish for power. But power, unlike knowledge, can only be gained for oneself by depriving someone else of it. Hence it is acquired by selfish and unscrupulous persons. The librarian, as a man of learning, will be controlled by holders of power. He might find some justification for Pafford's view in the suggestion of Plato that a lie is permissible in the true and ultimate interests of society. If Plato was right, which is questionable, the wise librarian might think fit to create in his selfish masters the illusion that their interests were being served.

As a matter of mere librarianship, the librarian who is *not* able even to look after his own readers will not be able to look after those who are not his own, and therefore the narrow circle of self interest provides a useful testing ground for possible cooperators. But it does not follow from this that every reader *will* best be looked after if the narrower interests receive first consideration. Nor does Pafford think this, for he says that considerations of 'general advantage' are *other* than the benefit of one's own readers, although his words supply no principle for reconciling the rival claims. H. M. Wriston does not seem to be so wary, for he appears to believe that the utilitarian philosophy has been proved true by the International Labour Office. His statement, which deserves attention because of the more than temporary interest of the principles involved, is that the International Labour Office has 'demonstrated that the improvement of conditions in one area is of benefit to all. This basic assumption, now buttressed by a sound body of evidence, must lie at the centre of post-war economic reconstruction.'<sup>2</sup> Let us substitute the words 'every man' for the word 'all,' which is an undesirable word, implying the good of a group, which is just as dangerous even if there is no one who does not belong to the group. We are now in the region of exact particulars, instead of vague generalities, and can consider the individual good of each person.

'Sound' as the evidence may be, it is not conclusive with regard to 'all' unless it is conclusive with regard to each separately. It must prove the benefit to accrue at a given instant of time to every single person living at that instant. This clearly cannot be done, and we must fall back on probabilities. Of what *sort* of conditions is it probable that the improvement in one area will benefit a definite, limited, but unfortunately unascertainable number of men? It seems to be true in the case of conditions of intellectual freedom, because the man who is himself free in this department of his life wishes to make every man similarly free. The benefit will not occur by mere wishing: the free man must be placed in effective relation with the men who are to benefit, and this demands unfettered interchange of ideas, so that ideas fructify and become the possession of many men. But Wriston says the conditions are economic. Here the value of the theory seems less certain. It suggests Benthamite principles, and resembles an excuse for local improvements at the expense of the rest of the world. Setting aside the vague benefit of 'all,' an inescapable fact is that X can benefit Y by handing over part of what he has to Y, his own standard of living being thus reduced, and the value of his life increased. But at present the aim is usually to benefit *oneself* by cooperation, or if 'all' are supposed to benefit, to see that oneself benefits the most. 'All' is a useful piece of mysticism whereby to gloss over the profitable transaction. Nor does the notion of *equal* benefit provide any loophole. There is no means of measuring equal benefit, and this is obvious in the case of the benefits of librarianship.

As an instance of how the principle of cooperation applies to other forms of it, the example of subject specialisation between libraries may be mentioned. When this is practised, individual libraries have to abstain from purchasing books which they could well do with for their own readers, in favour of books of a kind of which their readers have already more than enough. This calls for vision on the part of libraries and their financial backers—faculties or ratepayers. In its memorandum on the place of libraries in UNESCO the Library Association states:<sup>4</sup> 'Both for its own good and in the interests of international cooperation' each nation should have an adequate National Library and Information Centre. The assumption that whatever it regards as for its own good will be in the interests of international cooperation is lighthearted. If international cooperative specialisation arrives, the interests of international

cooperation may not seem to a nation to be for its own good, and will certainly not be for its own good *as a nation*. There are many who think that when the number of wavelengths available for broadcasting is finite, it does not conduce to one's own good but is rather a sign of weakness to give up the wavelengths one desires or possesses. General understanding of one's own good can only be gained after a broader and more self-critical type of education than nations usually offer their subjects.

To many it might seem a logical solution of the problems of cooperation that all the books should be the property of all the libraries. The result would then be that every person would have an equal right to every book, and there could be no selfish cornering of books. But there are reasons for rejecting such a communistic arrangement. It might be the case (and also it might not) that the same *result* would be produced by joint ownership of all books, but the moral value of the cooperative means of attaining the result would be absent. The mere giving up of what someone else has an enforceable claim upon has no value as an act : it represents the operation on the individual of an irresistible force. Property must be privately owned before it can be unselfishly placed at the disposal of someone who has no legal claim upon it.

Economic laws are sometimes invested with more significance than they deserve. Ranganathan makes the point that in intellectual matters there is a counterpart to the equilibrium of exports and imports of material goods : in regard to ideas, the country that imports these without corresponding exports will suffer, and the same applies to the older exporting countries who fail to import the new ideas of other countries.<sup>3</sup> Unfortunately India, instead of exporting philosophy, is importing and re-exporting science. It is true that trade by barter, which is one of the kinds of library commerce made possible by cooperation, will flourish on no profounder basis than the mutual advantage of the trading parties. Each having what the other wants, a profitable exchange takes place ; and UNESCO does much to encourage these useful negotiations. But they carry us no further than business morality, and are liable to be upset by anything that is not 'good business.' Even if the interchange continues over a long period, the final result, though beneficial, will be little more than a completed series of isolated transactions. Such is the philosophy of the Stock Exchange, a vacillating institution, and not a model for a philosophy that has to do with the spread of

knowledge. For full cooperation more is needed, most of all a conception of a new librarianship which it is desired to bring about, and at the realisation of which single actions are aimed. The purpose kept steadily in view should be the expression and development of personality, and not narrow self interest.

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## CHAPTER SEVEN

### SPECIALIST AND GENERALIST

IT is becoming increasingly recognised among librarians that service to students requires subject specialists. The theory of the classification of sciences is concerned with the relations of generalism and specialism, and it may be instructive to consider first whether that theory can say anything of value on this question.

The main task of a theory of the classification of sciences is to examine the possibility of that classification, and if it is possible, to enquire on what logical basis it is so. In this enquiry it is essential to know what we mean by classification, and what by logic.

Classification may be defined first as the thought that results in a systematic statement of the relations between types, and secondly as such a statement itself. We must next know what we mean by types and what by statement. Statement is either the expressed thought or the expressing it, and it may be expressed in actions, words or signs. Of the latter those in use are written or printed. For the present purposes types may be called kinds, and the main philosophical problems in connection with types or kinds are those that arise when we try to answer the questions 'Have kinds independent reality?' and 'Are they knowable?' The relations between genus and species resemble in some respects the different sort of relations between a concept (or universal) and its particulars, and the problem of how we are to think of all these entities has been a main thread running through centuries of acute speculation represented by the names of Plato, Aristotle, Abélard, Aquinas, Occam and many others. The problem is today as much the object of philosophical enquiry, in universities throughout the world and outside them, as it ever was; but the emphasis has shifted from the attempt to discover what these entities are to the elucidation of what we mean when, in making statements, we use words to signify them. Every shade of opinion has been held, from the pure realist view that ideas (in the Platonic sense) have existence independently of particulars and of us, by way of the view that they correspond to something

real in individuals but exist independently only for thought and not in reality, to the view that they do not exist at all, and that a class is nothing more than the totality of what it comprises ; and from the view that they are the eternal objects of knowledge, completely knowable but never completely known, to the view that they are simply what we mean. Upon the answers given to these questions, which have claimed more of the attention of philosophers since Plato than have any others, and which today are so far from being dead logic that they continue to engross us, will depend the point of view we adopt in regard to many profound issues, including the dignity of the individual, as well as the concerns of librarians in serving students by means of classifications devised for that purpose. For it was by way of postulating that the Form of unity under which individual particulars are subsumed is absolutely real and altogether higher and nobler than the individuals under it, that doctrines similar to the Hegelian of the superior greatness of the State or the authoritarian group were elaborated. And it will partly depend on the opinion we form of the separate nature of concepts, and of the truth or falsehood of the statements we suppose ourselves to make about them, whether we can think with Comte that there is a true order of sciences determined by the order of the objects of knowledge proper to them.

While therefore it is fairly easy to offer a moderately exact definition of classification and even of statement without being committed too far, the type or kind cannot be defined without committing ourselves to a philosophical position. Aristotle's is capable of being defended, and is considered by many to be based on careful argument, especially when interpreted with reference to the original texts. But his doctrine even in its original form is not alone adequate today, and he has been cursed with a large following of slavish simplifiers. Librarians, as methodologists, cannot do without a *Weltanschauung*; it does not greatly matter which philosophy they take as model, so long as they realise the necessity of having one and of adopting it critically. The relations between books are relations between kinds of enquiry, and it is absurd to suppose that the bearings of books upon one another can be well enough understood without sufficient preparation to enable the librarian to take up a definable philosophical position. The main requisite is not that his philosophy should be practical, or that it should be Aristotelian, but that it should be as true as he can make it, and as far as it goes. It should

aim at being an interpretation of our knowledge, as Aristotle's was of his. The wealth of modern sciences demands a less formal approach, and an appreciation of the content and purposes of the various studies.

Aristotle defines the genus as that part of the essence of anything which is predicable also of other things differing from it in kind. Other philosophers reject altogether the notion of essence, and refuse to believe that generic terms have anything to do with what things really are. They point out that the great majority of the genera with which we have to deal are in a certain sense man made : they are the product of human understanding (or the lack of it) and their very nature is the result and the expression of our interests and purposes. But it would be a mistake to infer from this that concepts are merely subjective, and order is nothing more than a human invention. The effective pursuit of our interests and promotion of our purposes are impossible unless our minds are kept constantly bent on an external objective reality, to disregard whose laws is to court error and disaster. To say that classification is man-made is to say no more than that it is fallible. Without entering at length into the discussion of how much we can know about what things are, it will be possible by considering for a moment one genus, to approximate a little more confidently to the question of what we are going to mean by logic.

If the genus 'conic section' is taken as an example, it is clear that we can carry out an exact classification of its species into hyperbola, parabola, ellipse, and circle ; and if we appropriate the term 'logical' classification to describe this sort of classification, it is clear also that the classification of sciences cannot be logical, since the subjects of their enquiries are not exactly known, as conic sections are. But a great deal of confusion has arisen because the term logic has not always been used with reference to such formal exactitude as we find in the classification of conic sections. And there is no real reason why the designation 'logical' *should* be restricted to cases where the material under consideration is amenable to exact division in accordance with formal rules. We are accustomed to expect something more from logic than that it should supply us with neat precepts that can hardly ever be used in practical work. We like to think that a course of action which we decide upon is the 'logical' thing to do, and that it is logical because it is reasonable. But much ambiguity will obviously arise in the theory of classification if some

call classification logical when it is reasonable and others call it logical when it obeys rules of formal division. Yet this is exactly what has happened. Gibson for example says that 'in the case of books . . . it is . . . more purposive, and therefore more logical, to fix on an attribute or group of attributes which happens to be of importance for the purpose, and to construct and classify the types in strict relation to it.'<sup>1</sup> Gibson is a logician. Savage on the other hand deplores the confusion of book with logical classification and would repudiate the latter<sup>2</sup>; and Baker, like Savage a librarian, says that 'in a special library it may be well for the sake of maximum utility to refrain from being excessively logical<sup>3</sup>; in other words, too much logic is useless. But if to be logical is to be reasonable and to think truly as far as possible, it can hardly be an ideal of librarianship to refrain from being logical in the interest of utility, since if we do not think truly we are mistaken about what is useful. And if logic is the study of how we think when we think truly, we cannot consistently repudiate logic; we can only repudiate the errors that may have been made in the attempt to pursue it. Since it is one of these errors to suppose that a perfectly sound scheme of logical division can be used where it does not apply, the misappropriation of that scheme, rather than the scheme itself, should be repudiated. The minds of the many librarians who have tried to decry logic have never been easy, and this is not surprising, since the broader meaning of logic, in the sense in which it may be defined as the study of how to find true reasons, has lurked in their minds alongside the narrower formalistic one.

The guarantee of the logical character of a classification of sciences cannot come from the side of a real world external to our minds, and made up of clearly defined separate objects like conic sections, the formal relations between which, and between their parts, classification might be supposed to express. It cannot come from this quarter simply because the objects and relations in question are not known. Thus there is no *true* order of sciences. The doctrine that there is, is an authoritarian one. It would refuse to allow that the investigator who follows the argument where it leads him, and accordingly works out for himself an orientation of the parts of science which are relevant to his interests, can have any hope of attaining truth. There could be no better corrective of the dogma of a true order of sciences than a study of the purposes that have guided scientists of the past in their experiments and researches,

and of the use they have made of other work carried out with quite different aims. An example of the latter practice is historical research, which often ignores the professed subject of a book, but finds the book of value for a purpose the author could not foresee. The 'true order of the sciences' requires also a person to whom that order will appear to be true, and for this purpose creates a General Man, this mythical person being shaped to resemble as closely as possible the ideal assenter to the dogmas of the inventors of the aforesaid true order. Having created him, it imputes to him a preconceived outlook, arbitrarily determined interests, obedience to authority, and peerless virtue. The next stage is for a rival true order to create a rival robot: these two types of General Man will secure adherents for their respective sides, and blood will be shed.

There being no true order of sciences, it follows that there is no *correct* place in classification for the specific subject. Hence we must search elsewhere for an answer to the question, which we are bound to put, 'can there be any sort of guarantee of the possibility of making a logical classification of sciences?' If not, we shall have to admit that the theory of classification has failed, and that librarians are to be abandoned to the dismal necessity of announcing that their classifications are not logical, in other words, of making a statement that may mean that librarians cannot be reasonable.

Perhaps they may call classifications which satisfy a certain condition logical, without fear of revealing an ignorance of logic. The condition is that classification should be the expression of one scientific purpose or of a reasonably coherent set of scientific purposes. This it will be if it is devised for special needs, whether in the specialised library or in the special department, and perhaps the future lies rather with libraries such as these than with the general library, which satisfies a hypothetical everyone and an actual no one. If this is so, it is better to turn to special classification for specialised collections than to attempt, by the elaborate provision of alternative places (as in Bliss) or by exhibitions (such as Savage would have) or by synthetic symbols (as in the Brussels scheme or that of Ranganathan) to force the general classification to do special work. These projects are like the multi-purpose tool that will not do any job properly. Special classifications would help to break up wooden standardisation, and would promote independence of judgement.

Scientific purposes can never be perfectly coherent, but whatever logic their classification does have will result from its expressing a

clearly defined purpose. Ultimately only the single individual can have a clear and coherent purpose in research, and only then if he is capable of a critical examination of his assumptions and aims. The conception of a single unified purpose is thus rather a logical ideal than an actuality. But how are we to know in practice when a scientific purpose can be called *one*—in other words, what gives unity to scientific research? We can at least say under what conditions there is *no* reasonably coherent purpose: they are familiar to librarians, for they are the conditions of the general library. To the general scheme of classification found in such a library hardly a modicum of logic can be allowed. A piece of scientific work reflects a completely coherent and unified scientific viewpoint if it never ranges over fields that are not completely relevant to the solutions of the questions at issue. This is scarcely ever possible, partly because side issues develop in the course of the work which it would be wasteful not to take the opportunity of following up, partly because it is impossible to be sure whether a line of enquiry is relevant or not till we have tried it. To lay down rules prescribing the degree of coherence necessary to make classification logical would be impossible. The practical necessities of co-operative specialisation, and of specialisation within the library, compel librarians to come to grips with the task of accurately defining special interests in difficult cases. In cooperative specialisation the work is likely to be taken out of their hands by faculty members, but public librarianship will demand a better intellectual equipment than librarians now possess. They should be qualified, as far as possible, to feel as the scientist or researcher feels, and to make common cause with him. It is not easy, as the scientist himself does not know what the limits of his enquiry are going to be, and in a sense he does not know what he is looking for until he has found it. His incalculable qualities place him in a lofty position, enabling him to despise the librarian, who grovels in some irrelevant field in the attempt to meet his requirements decently, and adopts some arrangement which brings on his head the scorn of the scientist, who does not know what he thinks himself, but he knows that the librarian is wrong.

Neither of the following assumptions should be made: that the *usefulness* of a classification for a special scientific purpose guarantees the truth of the statements made or implied in the classification; or that the *coherence* of scientific purposes makes statements true. The former assumption is fatal to freedom of enquiry, and represents

the attractive philosophy of pragmatism, which is always manoeuvring to swallow up librarianship ; the same philosophy underlies statements like those of Ballard, when he declares that scientific and literary research explores the ' wisdom and experience of the race ' with the possible result of improved control of the physical and social environment ; in this way the library, which is a social institution, ' discharges its social responsibilities.'<sup>3</sup> Librarianship should respect truth for its own sake, irrespective of social usefulness. The second assumption would imply a coherence theory of truth. But truth is not to be found in the coherence of statements, but in their correspondence with reality. Since reality is so imperfectly known, we cannot be sure when the correspondence exists, whereas the coherence of our beliefs can be known to ourselves with more certainty. Consequently there is a temptation to find in the fact that our beliefs fit together, evidence of their truth, and this is similarly prejudicial to the spirit of enquiry. If we could suppose that opinions would not cohere unless they severally corresponded with fact, their coherence would be a reliable criterion of their truth. Unfortunately falsity can be very coherent. Yet even the person who wishes to deceive tries to make his statements coherent, in other words to make them look as if they were true, and there does seem to be some ground for placing reliance on coherence not as we should place reliance on truth, but as we should welcome a test of it.

Too much should not be expected of classification in practice. It will always be less essential than adequate cataloguing and full provision of bibliographies. It is in a theoretical, not in a practical way, that the study of it is most valuable, and its value is direct to the librarian and indirect to those he serves. It enables him to grasp the interrelations of sciences, to keep abreast of knowledge, and to understand what is wanted by those who are advancing its frontiers. On the practical side the main task, of which no solution short of the total abolition of classification is in sight, is the task of making classification easily changeable in accordance with that most unstable of qualities—scientific importance. But even if classification were totally abolished in library practice, this would not make the slightest difference to the necessity for librarians to make a more extensive and searching study of the interrelations of the sciences than any other profession has to make.<sup>6</sup>

The theory of classification therefore supports specialisation, and would lead to the conclusion that, in the interest of logic, general

libraries should be split up into special departments, and that special and research libraries should become common, all these having an individual outlook on the world of knowledge, and a scheme of classification specially devised to express it. The value of logic and of classification is that they are not dead but living studies, and knowledge cannot advance without them. The fact that they are indispensable for knowledge is the reason why they are indispensable for librarianship. Knowledge is more effectively served and promoted by the special, analytical approach than by attempts at general syntheses ; this applies more particularly to the knowledge called 'scientific.' In the usually accepted sense classification exists for the library, but in a truer sense the library exists for classification, understood as a tool *and* a discipline in scientific thinking. Classification as an essential method of intellectual advance calls for library specialisation. When this specialisation is carried out in a physical medium by the actual housing of different literatures in different places, it naturally reacts on classification as a library technique, since it calls for the modification of technique to meet a more complicated situation. But specialisation may not be reflected in any such physical arrangement, and may only comprise events in the mind of the librarian : his special knowledge will then enable him to cooperate with other staff specialists for the better service of the special user of the library.

But other considerations, weightier even than what the theory of classification can offer, should be allowed to make themselves felt if we are to come to wise conclusions regarding the conflict between specialist and generalist. Today the learned world is trying as earnestly to escape from specialisation as librarianship is hurrying to embrace it—an indication that librarianship, although it has access to the newest thought, tends to lag behind. The justification of generalism is the mutual involvement of the special studies : the more specialised a study becomes, the more daring it becomes in converting totally different studies to its own ends. Hence the best specialist is not the narrow specialist but the one whose general knowledge enables him to procure grist to his mill from the most unheard-of and unlikely places. In order to succeed in this, he is even willing to become temporarily a specialist in something else. But to advocate *narrow* specialism is to deprive a branch of learning of the inspiration that comes from seeing knowledge as a whole. The world of learning, which has a longer experience of specialisation than

librarianship has, is now reacting strongly against it, on the ground that it narrows vision. Specialisation does not produce the respect of man for man. Scientific specialisation, which has had such unfortunate results for mankind, originated with the great French scientists of the age of the Revolution, who did not trespass outside their domain; but it was transferred to positivist philosophy and sociology by the 'organising' school of Comte, thenceforth to reappear in all authoritarian systems of society, such as the Marxian, with scientific and materialistic leanings. The specialist is often a narrow-minded fanatic, willing to follow the interconnection of facts only so far, and incapable of knowing the value of what he does, for the study of value is not part of *his* specialism. What his results are used for is no business of his, for his concern is with his specialism, and not with the other special purposes of those who pay him to produce results for he knows not what end. But sometimes he is confidentially informed of the end, and is willing to promote it to the last screw, even though the end is not knowledge: thus the specialist betrays civilisation by making knowledge a means when it should be an end, and subordinating truth to the interest of a group. This is what comes of pursuing knowledge by halves. No person who does not pursue knowledge for its own sake is to be trusted, either in private or in public life. The man who pursues it exclusively for the sake of career or leadership is not to be trusted. Leadership is alien to peace and is proper to war, which is the result of legitimate mistrust. The primary responsibility of every intellectual worker is to the whole of knowledge, not to any end outside it, nor to a part of it, however necessary may be the analysis of vast problems into fragments for departmental solution. Once this responsibility has been conceived, the individual scientist cannot waive it in favour of the interest of a team which uses his knowledge for its own ends; this is true whether the team is a small group of research workers using science for non-scientific ends, or the larger political team which forms a nation.

Despite the fact that he knows so little the narrow specialist is credited with something like wizardry by the unlettered; they call him an 'expert,' and in view of this state of affairs national governments are anxious to have experts on their side, so that they can quote the experts with a view to impressing the populace with the rightness and necessity of what they are doing. The advocate of synoptic views must face the entrenched confidence of these experts who, after

telling him that he does not know what he is talking about, prove it by letting drop casual hints of something that he does not understand. Universities and learned institutions cannot produce men with the whole view of life, partly because society and official bodies do not reward such men. It is becoming increasingly difficult, especially in hard-pressed parts of the world whose survival depends on the advance of science and the multiplication of production, for them to secure employment. The pursuit of knowledge for its own sake is regarded as a luxury by a society which does not respect the scholar, but forces him to compete for livelihood against those who have made themselves into efficient machines for assimilating the results of his work (preferably in a simplified form) with a view to their own self-advancement. Libraries should see that they give no support to a practice which encourages the growth of the type of mind that can only see one side of a problem, even if it is the useful side, and cares nothing about the whole of the truth. Understanding is nobler than exploitation.

Specialisation at its best is the expression of an inner necessity in the individual. It expresses the free choice of the man who has ranged over the whole of knowledge, and has decided that his understanding of the whole will be made more vivid and purposeful if he makes a particular part of it his own. This does not mean that he ceases to study the rest of knowledge : on the contrary, he travels widely throughout the whole realm of learning, looking for his treasures. Thus the paradoxical truth is that specialism is only justified because of generalism. But these are seldom the specialists we encounter today. The latter have not often developed their speciality on account of deepening interest and the need to develop their abilities to the full in a chosen field. Many have felt no other desire than to follow the course that would bring them the highest rewards. Thus they are willing to become society's slaves, and to model their intellectual life accordingly. The aim of the narrow specialist is to supply what society wants and to receive in exchange as much as he can extort from society. He is in no sense an artist in ideas, since his purpose is not self-expression. He does not ask whether society ought to want the product of his labours, nor whether society has the right to demand from him whatever it will. He is under contract, and that is all that matters. Whether civilisation could exist if all were like himself, whether he is helping to undermine liberty—these are not his special questions. It is clear that libraries

should wish to bring into existence, and to enlist within their walls, not this type of specialist, but the specialist who is also a generalist. Hence the undesirability of departmentalising libraries unless all the subject departments can be housed in the same building with complete cooperation and intercommunication. These conditions are likely to be found in even the largest public libraries, as in the Enoch Pratt library at Baltimore, but in universities they are capable of being upset by petty jealousies, which are inimical to the synthesis of knowledge and to its advance on a broad front. If in these circumstances a librarian does what he can to restore sanity and universality, he is exposed to the criticism of university staff specialists. As L. H. Kirkpatrick says 'The French student who spends several weeks investigating the role of the servant in French comedy is either going to receive a disproportionate idea of the influence of such domestics, or if he keeps his balance, is going to conclude he wants no more of study if that is what it leads to. Librarians have been accused of setting up counter-attractions within the academic world, with their browsing-rooms and exhibits of non-curricular literature. Librarians might with justice accuse faculty members of driving students away from the world of books because of the trivial things they ask students to investigate.'<sup>4</sup> The evil effects of specialisation are harder to counteract in the case of specialising libraries than in the case of the individual specialist: the latter can be given balance by a long preliminary general training, which will put him in possession of the knowledge of how to rectify the balance for himself if it should become upset in later life. But the student desiring wide knowledge who has convenient access only to a specialising library is more handicapped.

What type of generalism and of specialism is it fitting for the librarian to have as part of his own intellectual make-up? The best education for the librarian cannot be *provided* without wholesale reorganisation of university education, a reorganisation called for not merely in the interest of librarianship, but for the preservation of civilisation from destruction at the hands of narrow fanaticisms. Steps in this direction are being taken by the University of Chicago and also by its pioneering School of Library Science. But as in most things, better hope of success attends the effort to *acquire* the best than to provide it. And the Chicago Graduate Library School is hampered by its philosophy. 'The school's programme of courses and its requirements for degrees reflect the belief of its faculty that

librarianship is a practical, rather than a purely theoretic science ; that is, that it aims, not at knowledge for its own sake, but at knowledge for the sake of excellence in the functioning of libraries.<sup>7</sup> What do libraries function for ? Service to the public. What does service to the public function for ? Contact between books and readers. What does contact between books and readers function for ? Here we have an infinite regress, and can only put a stop to it by finding something that does not function for something else. Knowledge of this is clearly not knowledge of something that functions for the sake of the functioning of libraries. It is not knowledge of anything that functions. If therefore the knowledge is acquired, it is not acquired for the sake of any excellence in functioning. Hence it must be acquired for its own sake. It follows that the Graduate Library School does not know what libraries function for.

Today it is fashionable to lament that Goethe was the last humanist, that von Harnack was the last of the old school of librarians, that encyclopaedic knowledge is no longer possible, that the whole view is lost to us. The monotonous regularity of these epitaphs need not depress the librarian unduly if he takes active steps to remedy his present deficiencies. Many of the laments miss the point. They base themselves on the fast disappearing possibility of acquiring an authoritative knowledge of even a few sciences. But this is not what we should aim to do. Librarians should resist the temptation to pile up information, leading to the easily won pride of the man who airs his encyclopaedic knowledge. A view of life as a whole is ensured not by encyclopaedic but by philosophical knowledge. Philosophy of the sciences claims for itself no special knowledge of any of the sciences, but the unique critical position of observer of them all. It approaches them with a view to enquiring into their methods of working, and the suppositions on which these are based. It compares their questions and problems. The result is a methodological, comparative survey of the purposes and interests of the various sciences, of the meaning and interrelation of the kinds of questions they ask, of the values of the procedures they employ, and of the assumptions that are involved in supposing that these procedures are adequate. At present no profession requires this knowledge of its members, but librarianship needs the knowledge.

Considerable acquaintance with the subject matter of the sciences is necessary for the effective carrying out of such a programme. Often the philosopher is baffled by the subject matter of the particular

area of knowledge on which he is working : but it is still possible to follow the Socratic method—to ask questions and receive answers. Although this might seem to place the philosopher in the odious position of one who intrudes everywhere without right of entry and with no knowledge of the domain, it does not work out thus in practice. If it does the fault is generally the philosopher's for having nothing interesting to say. Many philosophers can succeed in making the fundamental nature of their comments and questions felt, so that other workers appreciate the philosopher's often unexpected ways of looking at the various parts of knowledge. It is possible for the scientist to err in logic, and for the philosopher to mistake one part of the scientific subject matter for another ; but the philosopher at least should regard this as an opportunity for having his mind cleared of error.

No other training would equally well fit the librarian to deal with the multifarious problems of book selection, classification, reference work, and service to students, and, what is more important, no better education for life can be devised than a thorough grounding in the interrelation of the sciences from a philosophical point of view. The width of the training would prevent its relapse into the barren minutiae of philosophy itself or of the subject field in which philosophy would be exercised. This part of the librarian's education would be essentially a general one. All that he would need to do in the specific departments of knowledge would be to read a moderately advanced survey, so as to obtain a 'hang' of the subject matter. General training should be at university level and under the faculty of philosophy, not of the social sciences, so as to avoid producing minds with the sociological bias. A large number of sociological studies are based on behaviourist or pragmatist assumptions which offer no resistance to overt or disguised tyranny, and lead to the extinction of the respect of man for man.

Four years would be the minimum period for a general university course for librarians, and it could be followed by two more years in a chosen subject field for those who wished to become special librarians, the two courses being either consecutive or separated by an interval of employment. These courses, either four or six years as the case might be, would be followed by a one-year course in library science, making a total of five or seven years of university training for all librarians. At the end of their general training the prospective librarians should be able to find their way about such topics as the

following chosen at random, and should feel at home in the literature and discussion involved :—

- Ideas on the nature of life in the biological sense.
- Theories of evolution and philosophical criticism of them.
- Effects of psychoanalysis on other studies and on social life ; logical examination of concepts of psychoanalysis.
- Historical and modern controversies on the fundamental notions of geography.
- Borderline and conflict studies, such as—
  - philosophy and physics,
  - physics and chemistry,
  - theology and anthropology,
  - philosophy and theology.
- Principles governing the sharing out of the world's goods.
- Difficulties men must surmount in order to be rational ; limits of reason.
- Meaning of democracy.
- Nature of intelligence ; possibilities of measuring it, and of increasing it.
- Recipes for happiness ; relations between happiness, freedom, and self-development as alternative ends.
- Comparison of the philosophical, religious, and scientific ways of regarding events.
- Comparative study of the opinions expressed on history, geography, politics, philosophy and science by writers of different nationalities.
- Purpose of the study of history.
- Causes of friction between human beings, and methods of avoiding and removing them.
- Main engineering projects carried out, principles exemplified in them, and processes of thought and experiment whereby the principles came to be known.
- Relation between law and justice.
- Processes of manufacture ; nature and origin of raw materials used, and their world resources.
- First hand knowledge of a wide range of tools and instruments, machine tools, laboratory equipment, instruments of art and music.
- Use of statistics ; principles of measurement in human and natural sciences.

The course should be an interest course : having started out by engaging the interest of the student, it should aim not to lose this interest when it conducts him into the more difficult regions of enquiry that are met with in every study. The standard should be as high as can be maintained over a wide field, and although the text-book approach should be avoided, genuine difficulty should not be avoided. At all costs such a course in the interrelations of the sciences should not be allowed to degenerate into a 'good general education.' Lectures should be given according to the usual practice of the university, and not by librarians. From the start every student should be encouraged to look out for his own special subject, to choose it within six months, and to complete his chosen project within the four years, with supervision throughout. Thus each person would have first hand experience of tackling special work, which would be carried on simultaneously with general work, and would not take the form of grinding at a special subject to the exclusion of all else. The chosen subject should be regarded as the most suitable occasion for practice in the expression of ideas in writing, and the student's own written work could be read aloud by him to his supervisor.

This scheme of education would attract and would help to create real individuals with thoughts of their own, and with a lively and interested outlook on life as a whole. The moments of peace, joy, and human affection, and the poetic and artistic revelations that make life worth living, would come to be valued most of all, since the tyrannous demands of a narrowly scientific society would not be allowed to banish these experiences from their lives. They would also have met and heard able men—explorers, scientists, doctors, philosophers. In the course of their work they would have become accustomed to the use of the essential reference tools and bibliographies in French, German and English, so that little further attention need be given to this in their year's library course. The approach to subjects would be through individual matters of importance, and the fields of knowledge concerned would be covered in dealing with these topics. Thus all knowledge would be relevant to something, the arbitrary divisions of sciences and the conventional text-books being disregarded. The aim should be to familiarise the student with the world's great books rather than with text-books. Even in the borderline studies of sciences the fundamental principles should be arrived at not by starting out from

definitions of sciences but by considering the various and conflicting ways of answering interesting questions. There should be wide latitude of choice : all students should not be required to pursue all subjects, but each according to his inclination, the whole being nevertheless planned in such a way that no important part of the intellectual and creative experience of man should, in its broad aspects and relations, be a closed book to any student. Philosophy as a special subject should receive no more emphasis than the others. The whole method of approach throughout the curriculum would be intended as philosophical : the idea would not be to produce professional philosophers but thinking human beings. This cannot be done unless the problems of the ultimate values and ends of action are fearlessly faced by each one, and these are philosophical problems.

So much for the desirability of a broader and more fundamental education : its possibility is another matter. It would not suffice to offer instruction by specialists in widely scattered fields, in the hope that interrelation would take place in the mind of the student. The knowledge must be interrelated before being presented. We have today few men who could impart such knowledge. Our universities neither teach nor know the interrelations of their departmental studies. History does not include the impact of science on past circumstances and events ; science hardly includes its own history, and not at all its influence on thought and life ; and so on throughout the range of knowledge. First attempts at a more philosophical education would necessarily be clumsy, and the syllabus would appear shapeless. But this state of affairs would improve as studies began to cross-fertilise, and learners became teachers.

In his extra two years the subject specialist should learn the subject, not the bibliography. The knowledge acquired in this course would be useful for employment, which would be a danger, since the true purpose of the education, which is the further development of personality, might thus be overshadowed. Requirements of employers should be considered, but should not be allowed to turn education for life into education for livelihood. So short a period of training as two years would not enable the librarian to rival his specialist reader in the subject field, but the librarian would score by his unique combination of general and special. In neither the general nor the special course should emphasis be placed on books or bibliography ; the future librarians should use books in the same way

as all the other students of the university, and should receive the same instruction in the use of books and libraries which all will receive as a matter of course. Books should satisfy a felt need, and not be thrust upon the student.

The year's work in library science should not be carried out in the same part of the university buildings. It should comprise the three following themes : the purpose of librarianship ; the science of communication and everything that relates in theory and practice to the passage of ideas from mind to mind ; and bibliography in two parts—first a survey of all the librarian's machinery of catalogues, indexes, and bibliographies for making knowledge accessible, this part to include a study of the research tools of those subjects which were not chosen by the student during his general and special education ; secondly the history and description of the book. Minutely documented 'scientific' bibliography, which uses an elaborate apparatus of textual or comparative criticism to establish unimportant facts, or not even to do this but only to place a tool which may never be used in the hands of a hypothetical researcher, should be avoided, since it represents either escapism or mere mechanism. Techniques such as classification and cataloguing in their routine aspects should be left to be learnt during employment.

After leaving his university the librarian should be respected (not encouraged, for encouragement implies interference) in his desire to carry his studies further. It would be found that librarians thus trained would be a steady influence in the world of learning, and would be powerful and impartial conciliators in the conflicts of science and humanism which so vitally concern the safety and happiness of each of us. Librarians would be recognised as peculiarly able to discriminate between the temporary, acrimonious and jealous elements in conflicts, and those profounder differences and resemblances which underlie the parts of knowledge and the varieties of experience.

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## CHAPTER EIGHT

### THE INTERRELATION OF THE SCIENCES, WITH REFERENCE TO THE THEORIES OF AUGUSTE COMTE

THE study of the interrelation of the sciences is fundamental to librarianship, and with some exaggeration might be said to be librarianship. The suggestion has been made that this study should form the main part of the librarian's education, and it is also intimately involved in questions of classification. Furthermore, certain suggestions or overt theories have been advanced in connection with it, by philosophers and librarians alike, which would have the consequence of undermining the intellectual independence of the individual. For all these reasons it is necessary to examine the philosophical basis of the study. Exercises of this nature provide, incidentally, practical examples of the kind of independent thought which librarians can undertake as their own contribution to freedom of thought in general. For there is no use in upholding freedom of thought if we are not prepared to think ourselves.

Perhaps the matter of greatest moment is the question whether there is a true order of the sciences—an order, that is to say, which alone expresses their real relations. The contention here will be that there is not, and that while an order of sciences for specialised purposes is possible with a reasonable degree of logic, a general scheme of sciences claiming to present the order in which they are really related is not possible with any semblance of logic.

It was said of one of the editors of *Nature* that he made the mistake of forgetting that he was the editor and not the author of *Nature*. Lord Samuel includes in his recent *Book of Quotations*<sup>1</sup> the saying of Henri Bordeaux 'L'influence de la nature qui ne parle que si l'homme se tait,' and this golden silence is in remarkable contrast to certain of the more egoistic pronouncements of the novelist's compatriot Auguste Comte. The latter has received the apotheosis of generations of librarians, whose ranks count some unwitting Comtes today. His philosophy of the sciences was an authoritarian dogma.

Even in the present supremacy of unreason it would not be strictly correct to say that we need *more* urgently than ever before hospitality to the truth, which is essential always : but the claim made in Russia, and the assumption which sometimes escapes notice in England and America, to have set forth the true order of the sciences, would if backed by power deny to everyone else both the logical possibility of independent enquiry and the freedom to attempt it. The claim is an astonishing one, and not on the face of it likely to win, much less to command the thoughtful approval of even the novice, yet it is made and listened to in all seriousness. Unthinking acquiescence in small things or large being a symptom of vast hidden dangers deserves the attention of those who are vigilant in the interest of intellectual freedom.

Most of the theories of classification propounded since Comte, as for instance those of Flint, and nearly all the general schemes of classification, such as Bain's and the various schemes for libraries, have accepted the basic idea of hierarchy which he invented. A great deal of disservice has thus been done, and must inevitably continue to be done, to the individual aims of researchers, to whom no hierarchies, whether Comte's or not, are of interest.

The first objection to the doctrine of a true order of the sciences is that it confuses 'knowledge' with what knowledge is of. There is a temptation among successful seekers after knowledge to equate the order or hierarchy of the sciences with the 'order of nature,' the confusion being analogous to Eddington's identification (pointed out by L. S. Stebbing<sup>2</sup>) of 'the world of physics' with 'the physical world.' The former is peculiar to physics, and consists of the opinions of physicists ; the latter is what physicists hold opinions *about*, and is independent of physics. In the same way there is in Bliss, who advocates the authoritarianism of a consensus,<sup>3</sup> a false identification of 'the natural order of the sciences' with 'the order of the natural sciences.'<sup>4</sup> It is scarcely noticed that in the second phrase only the sciences are natural, as having nature for their object, whereas in the first their *order* is called natural ; this implies, if the term natural is used in the same sense in each, that the order of the sciences is *given*, as if it were part of the same nature that the sciences have for their object. But it is not. He says elsewhere 'The systems of knowledge, the systems of classification, and the consensus in which they are established, are no less durable than other *systems of nature* and of human society.'<sup>5</sup> It is fortunate for

us that all the systems mentioned are not as durable as the hills.

So soon as writers try to answer the question 'is there a true order of the sciences?' a general mêlée results, in which the antithesis between those who answer negatively and affirmatively is not really a dispute about an *x* whose existence is respectively affirmed and denied, but an argument in which those who assert the existence of *x* are contradicted by those who, in the confusion between *x* and *y*, deny the existence of *y*. If *x* is what we seek to know and *y* the knowledge of it, it is not surprising that those who are sure there is an *x* but think of it as *y* are amazed that others have the hardihood to doubt it; nor is it surprising that the latter, to whom the imperfections of *y* are obvious, find it ridiculous that they should be required, by those who assume the existence of *x* to be at stake, to admit in a downright manner that *y* exists. Unfortunately the expression 'the system of the sciences' is as capable of suggesting, in the hands of any who regard themselves as experts, the system of interrelated *objects* of knowledge which science investigates (*x*) as it is capable of suggesting the far more hypothetical system of interrelated *knowledges* (*y*). It is as correct to say that there must be an *x* (for its existence is a presupposition of science) as it is to deny that there can be a perfect *y*. But many who have wished to draw up schemes of knowledge, whether for state 'educational' or other propaganda or for nobler ends, have assumed that since the facts of nature are necessarily related, the same kind of necessity governs the connections in presumed knowledge, and that these are well known to them.

The second objection to the doctrine is that it is question-begging; this is a consequence of the confusion just pointed out. 'Abordant maintenant d'une manière directe cette grande question' Comte says<sup>6</sup> 'rappelons-nous d'abord que, pour obtenir une classification naturelle et positive des sciences fondamentales, c'est dans la comparaison des divers ordres de phénomènes dont elles ont pour objet de découvrir les lois, que nous devons en chercher le principe. Ce que nous voulons déterminer, c'est la dépendance réelle des divers études scientifiques'. Or, 'cette dépendance ne peut résulter que de celle des phénomènes correspondants.' This argument has the following form: 'Let *a*, *b*, and *c* be sciences. It is desired to find their relations. What are the phenomena with which they deal? Answer, *x*, *y*, and *z*. But it is known,' the argument continues, 'that *x*, *y*, and *z* are such that *x* and *z* stand in a relation

*p* to *y*. Therefore *a* and *c* stand in a relation *p<sub>1</sub>* to *b*.' But in fact the supposed data are really the matters of inquiry. Whether the phenomena with which the sciences in question deal are *x*, *y*, and *z* is just what the sciences exist to discover ; and whether, if these are the phenomena, they are related in the manner *p* is what the sciences exist to discover.

A third objection is that the theory of a true order of the sciences takes on the guise of determinism. For the 'true order' tends to become invested with an oracular character remarkably favourable to its author's anticipations of immortality, as when Comte, after laying down the sequence of sciences which mankind inevitably follows on its way to positivism, offers as a fact and not an opinion the remark 'il est devenu impossible . . . de méconnaître la destination finale de l'intelligence humaine pour les études positives.'<sup>7</sup> On another page he says 'la philosophie positive est seule destinée à prévaloir selon le cours ordinaire des choses. Seule elle a été, depuis une longue suite de siècles, constamment en progrès, tandis que ses antagonistes ont été constamment en décadence. Que ce soit à tort ou à raison, peu importe ; le fait général est incontestable, et il suffit.'<sup>8</sup> If sciences really were 'destined' to develop and to be classified according to the general law which Comte claimed to have discovered, no wonder this 'sufficed' for him. To the discredit of multitudes, an imposed intellectual régime suffices for them also. But those who think that reason does 'matter,' and that it might be given the chance to decide between views, will hesitate to believe that Nature speaks to men through Comtes.

What principle then can underlie an order of the sciences or of the masses of their printed tools ? The orderliness that we seek cannot be achieved by supposing some area of the natural world, and the relations exemplified in it, to be previously known and then imposed on a wayward profusion of interests, knowledge and half knowledge. For science derives what unity it has less from singleness of external reference than from singleness of intention guiding the study of something enigmatic. There being no 'true' order of sciences, any classification of them is justified if it expresses and serves some scientific purpose. But the system makers have never acknowledged this simple fact. Comte points out that there are 720 possible classifications of 6 fundamental sciences, but goes on mistakenly to assert 'C'est donc dans ce choix d'un seul ordre vraiment rationnel, parmi le nombre très-considérable des

systèmes possibles, que consiste la difficulté.<sup>9</sup> Mill writes more sensibly (but strangely supposes he is defending Comte) 'It is always easy to find fault with a classification. There are a hundred possible ways of arranging any set of objects, and something may almost always be said against the best and in favour of the worst of them. But the merits of a classification depend on the purposes to which it is instrumental. We have shown the purposes for which M. Comte's classification is intended. Mr. Spencer has not shown that it is ill adapted to those purposes.'<sup>10</sup> The approach is sound, sounder than what it seeks to defend. For Comte's purposes were of the sort that mean to tell us what we ought to know about Nature as a whole, and not about the portion of it that was Comte. His was the real, objective hierarchy of sciences, and he could not have allowed that it was only justified by serving his purposes, for then any other hierarchy would have been justified (and is) by serving any other purposes. In fact Comte's classification only serves the purpose of exposing his views and methods, and compels no inevitable assent.

The truth of this last statement will appear more clearly if we consider at closer quarters some of the principles (if they can be so called) underlying Comte's scheme for the sciences. He says<sup>11</sup> 'Le point de départ étant nécessairement' (why?) 'le même dans l'éducation de l'individu que dans celle de l'espèce, les diverses phases principales de la première doivent représenter les époques fondamentales de la seconde. Or, chacun de nous, en contemplant sa propre histoire, ne se souvient-il pas qu'il a été successivement, quant à ses notions les plus importantes, théologien dans son enfance, métaphysicien dans sa jeunesse, et physicien dans sa virilité?' The answer for one person at least is a simple negative. Our subject matter is not such as will exemplify any law whose universality can be revealed to introspection. Further, there is no certain evidence in what order the special sciences separated out from primitive undifferentiated knowledge, and therefore no warrant for assuming any such order to be universal.

The inadequacy of the principle of historical sequence for inter-relating the sciences forces Comte himself to say of sociology 'phénomènes sociaux, qui . . . méritent, soit par leur *importance*, soit par les difficultés propres à leur étude, de former une catégorie distincte.'<sup>12</sup> He is now falling back on the characteristics of sciences and the problems special to each, thus making use of

principles other than that of the 'loi des trois états.' For what is importance? It is not the origin of sciences, nor the order in which they arose, nor has it regard to what precedes or follows them in a temporal sequence, nor is it an invariant character of sciences, for it waxes and wanes, nor can we decide what sciences *matter* without considering to whom they matter, and in what connection.

Comte furthermore divides sciences into 'simple' and 'complex, in an arbitrary fashion; but the terms have stuck in the literature of librarianship. He says 'le simple mouvement d'un corps pesant . . . présente réellement . . . un sujet de recherches plus compliqué que la question astronomique la plus difficile.'<sup>13</sup> 'Tous les phénomènes chimiques sont nécessairement plus compliqués que les phénomènes physiques.'<sup>14</sup> Why? 'Tous les êtres vivants présentent deux ordres de phénomènes essentiellement distincts, ceux relatifs à l'individu et ceux qui concernent l'espèce . . . Le dernier ordre de phénomènes est évidemment plus compliqué et plus particulier que le premier.'<sup>15</sup> 'La philosophie positive se trouve donc naturellement partagée en cinq sciences fondamentales, dont la succession est déterminée par une subordination nécessaire et invariable, fondée indépendamment de toute opinion hypothétique' (except Comte's) 'sur la simple comparaison approfondie des phénomènes correspondants: c'est l'astronomie, la physique, la chimie, la physiologie, et enfin la physique sociale. La première considère les phénomènes les plus généraux, les plus simples, les plus abstraits et les plus éloignés de l'humanité; ils influent sur tous les autres, sans être influencés par eux. Les phénomènes considérés par la dernière sont, au contraire, les plus particuliers, les plus compliqués, les plus concrets, et les plus directement intéressants pour l'homme; ils dépendent, plus ou moins, de tous les précédents, sans exercer sur eux aucune influence.'<sup>16</sup> How are the moons of Jupiter more simple than a sow's ear? How more abstract? Why is the post office more complicated and particular than the sunset? and why more interesting?

Not content with deriving from supposedly known natural objects the one and only truth about the relations between the sciences of *those* objects, Comte would also extract from the same natural world the principles of classification: not only, that is to say, the principles of *this* classification of *these* sciences but the principles of *classification*. For it was he who made fashionable the recourse

to the natural sciences for guidance on the principles of classification. 'La théorie générale des classifications' Comte says in his deuxième leçon<sup>16</sup> 'établie dans ces derniers temps par les travaux philosophiques des botanistes et des zoologistes, permet d'espérer un succès réel dans un semblable travail en nous offrant un guide certain par le véritable principe fondamental de l'art de classer, qui n'avait jamais été conçu distinctement jusqu'alors. Ce principe est une conséquence nécessaire de la seule application directe de la méthode positive à la question même des classifications qui, comme tout autre, doit être traitée par observation au lieu d'être résolue par des considérations *a priori*. Il consiste en ce que la classification doit ressortir de l'étude même des objets à classer, et être déterminée par les affinités réelles et l'enchaînement naturel qu'ils présentent.' It is true that we can only study classification in itself by seeing how it is exemplified in the classification of *something*. But a possible and (as Aristotle showed) a valuable kind of inquiry tries to discover how, in the several acts of classifying, common forms of thought are revealed.

Mill draws attention to Comte's methods, pointing out that he claimed an unlimited licence of adopting hypothetical conceptions, 'without any vain scruple, in order to satisfy, within proper limits, our just mental inclinations, which always turn, with an instinctive predilection, towards simplicity, continuity, and generality of conceptions.'<sup>17</sup> It was doubtless an instance of such a predilection when Comte, on behalf of 'all' of us, dismissed the problems of Newtonian attraction as 'insoluble'.<sup>18</sup>

To many it has appeared in curious contrast with what they suppose was Comte's earlier acuteness that he should eventually have founded a religious sect with all the trappings of a cult, in which he himself officiated as high priest. But if the view taken here is correct, this was but the final manifestation of a dogmatic temperament that had been his all along. His sociological views confirm this. 'M. Comte,' Mill says<sup>19</sup> '... whose social system, as unfolded in his *Système de Politique Positive* aims at establishing . . . a despotism of society over the individual, surpass(es) anything contemplated in the political ideal of the most rigid disciplinarian among the ancient philosophers.' Comte's ideal requires that the 'doctrine sociale commune' should be assented to by all, not that it should be true.

On the other hand some of the philosophical patentees who have

invented schemes for the interrelation of the sciences branded with their own names have been innocent of all conscious or deliberate intention to dogmatise. In inventing and describing schemes for their sole satisfaction they have been unaware that this was what they were doing. They have thought that they were rendering universally, for the benefit of all, the service they were rendering themselves. Lovers of books, they have no doubt carried about with them the mental image of a private library of their own, with every subject dear to them well represented, and placed in the right relation (so it seemed) to other subjects as dear to them. At his desk, such a writer enjoys the power of the sultan : he need consider no one else, and can move hundreds of folios with his pen. If he conceives biology historically or morphologically he is at liberty to do so, and none will interfere. He may find a kindred spirit, and thus it comes about that the scheme of any Geddes and Thomson is eminently satisfactory to the Geddes and Thomson.<sup>20</sup> And why not ? But unfortunately such authors have seldom gone out of their way to emphasise that they were not legislating for mankind ; despotism is not less dangerous for being benevolent, and more dangerous when it is insidious.

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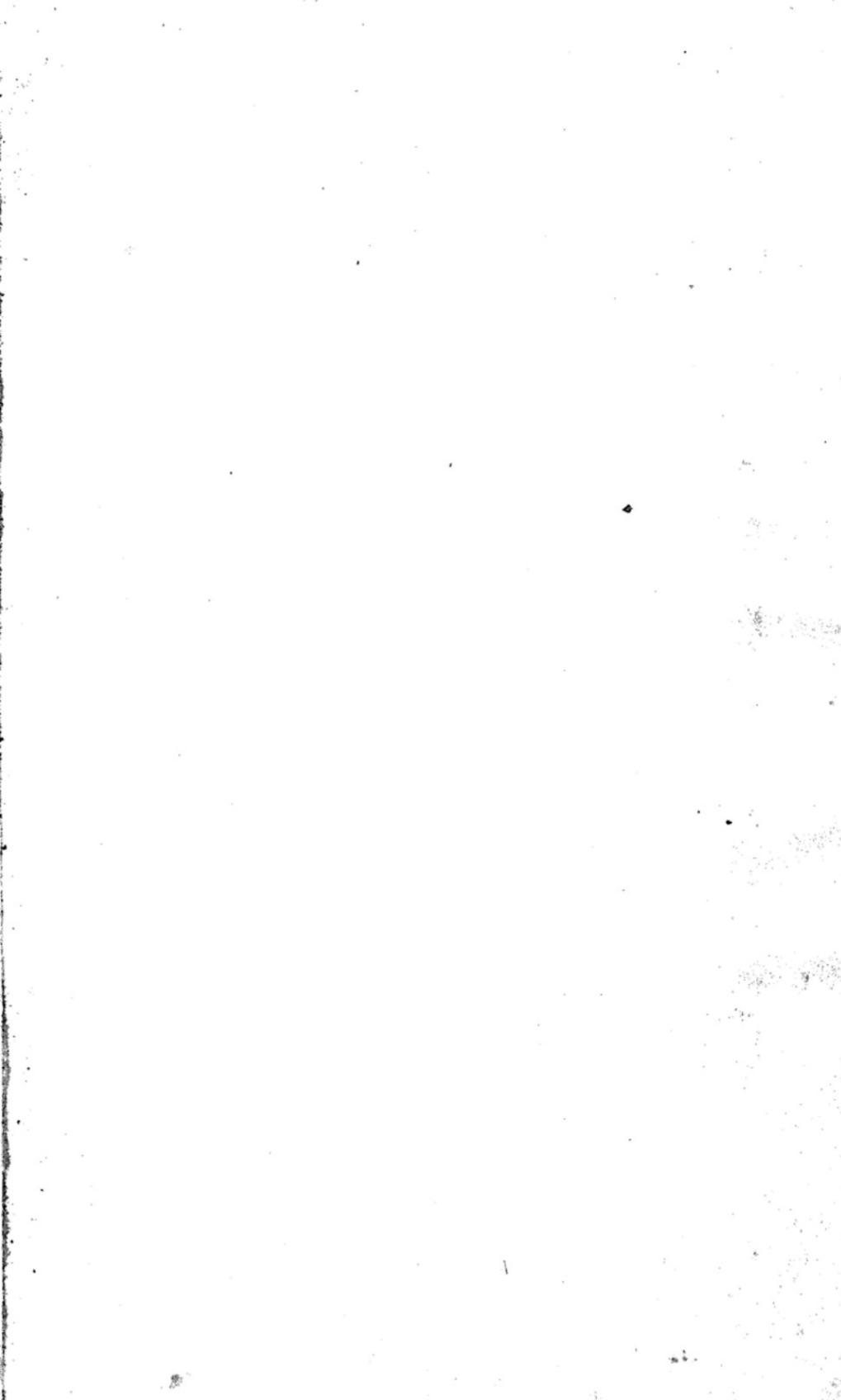
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